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THE CHART AND SCALE  
OF TRUTH  
BY WHICH TO FIND THE CAUSE OF ERROR

LECTURES READ BEFORE THE  
UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD AT THE LECTURE FOUNDED BY  
THE REV. JOHN BAMPTON M.A.

BY EDWARD TATHAM D. D.

LATE RECTOR OF LINCOLN COLLEGE OXFORD

A NEW EDITION REVISED CORRECTED AND  
ENLARGED FROM THE AUTHOR'S MANUSCRIPTS WITH  
A MEMOIR PREFACE AND NOTES  
BY E. W. GRINFIELD M. A.

LATE OF LINCOLN COLLEGE



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# CHART AND SCALE OF TRUTH,

BY WHICH TO FIND THE CAUSE

OF ERROR.

## PART II. THEOLOGY.

### CHAP. I.

#### *The Logic of Theology.*

TO this general Chart of Truth, speculative, practical and poetical, I now proceed to add another and far higher province, or rather, that which forms their metropolis and capital. Like a metropolis however, though distinct and superior, it holds an intimate connexion with all, and at once imparts and receives strength and glory from the union. This is a department of science, distinct in its nature, superior in its origin, more extensive in its objects, and more im-

portant in its end—in which, the intellect, the will, and the imagination have universally the deepest interest, and the sublimest exercise.

This metropolitan province is the science of theology—a science resulting from the relation between God the Creator, the moral Governor of the universe, and man, the creature, the moral agent in this lower world. Out of this supreme relation, springs the law of the moral Governor, on the one hand—which is the will of God—and on the other, the obligation of the moral agent operating on the will and affections of man.—Here we find the foundation of all religion, which forms the crown and perfection of intellectual and moral truth.

Theologic truth consequently does not spring out of any material subject in the compass of the universe, nor from the mind of man, in its various operations or imitative effects, like those of the other kinds of truth, which we have previously discussed. It arises from another, and far higher source—the will of God, more fully and more immediately declared, than in the ordinary administration

of his providence. It is thus derived from the noblest origin, and it has in view the noblest end—the immortal happiness of man.

This distinct and divine dispensation opens a new field of knowledge and is productive of a new species of truth, which considered logically, is far more distinct from any of those which we have hitherto analyzed, than any of their distinctions, however important, from each other. It is this difference which constitutes the science of theology—a science of which Aristotle was altogether ignorant—or he would have founded his ethics on another basis. It would also have enlarged his logic, for it would have brought him acquainted with another and far higher kind of truth, than any of those on which he so sagaciously reasoned.

But, as reason is concerned with the investigation and evidence of all truth which relates to man, however imparted, or through whatever channel, this species of truth, though infinitely superior to every other, hath a logic appropriate and peculiar to itself. This logic is now to be analyzed and arranged according to the spirit and scope of the

general rule which we have heretofore laid down<sup>1</sup>.

Of the existence of the moral Governor of nature reason requires no particular proof. She finds him in every thing material which he has made, and feels him in every act of the mind he has created. But of his will, or law, she stands in need of vast and various information. Of the existence of this Almighty agent, reason is immediately and intuitively convinced by the will of man, by conscience, that internal or moral sense, which is the voice of God, proclaiming his presence in the human heart. But of the nature and duty of moral obedience, which is the counterpart of this law, she requires "line upon line, and precept upon precept."

All law and obligation, practically considered, (and whatever relates to will is practical), are words, devoid of meaning, unless they have a sanction to secure their mutual operation. Of the general sanction of reward and punishment (which, though inverse, has the same influence on the will), reason is immediately and intuitively convinced by

<sup>1</sup> See vol. i. p. 69.



conscience—"Wickedness is condemned by her own witness<sup>2</sup>." But on the nature, proportion, extent, and duration of punishment or reward, reason cannot pronounce with any sufficient certainty and precision.

Whatever natural reason has discovered of the will or law of God, or of the nature and duties of moral obligation, is properly termed Natural theology. This was not only the highest and most honourable employment of the human mind, in the estimation of the heathen sages of antiquity, but has received the far higher approbation of an inspired writer—"When the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these having not the law, are a law unto themselves: who show the works of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts meanwhile accusing or excusing each other<sup>3</sup>."

Such was the high employment of Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, and many other philosophers of Greece and Rome, who made laudable and considerable progress

<sup>2</sup> Wisdom, xvii. 11.

<sup>3</sup> Rom. ii. 14, 15.

in the study of moral truth. But, as these sages, in their investigation of physical truth, are found, by the experiments of modern science, to have been miserably defective and erroneous; so have they been proved, by the superior light of that theologic truth, which we derive from revelation, to be still more defective and erroneous in their moral and religious researches.

This divine revelation is conveyed to man by the word of God, and the truth which it contains is, therefore, called *theologic*. It exhibits to us the code of the new law, as distinguished from the old law, or the law of nature. It is new, not only as being conveyed to us “by a new and living way;” but by its suspending or superseding the old law, as far more perfect in its information, more beneficial in its end, and more adapted to our moral wants and requirements.

By this revelation, we are far more clearly informed of the law, or will of God, as our moral Governor; and of his purpose and dispensation, in securing the happiness of man. By this revelation, we are more distinctly informed of our moral obligation to

that law, and of all the particular duties, which spring out of that obligation, towards God and our neighbour. We are also hence informed more fully and accurately of the sanction of that law, of those punishments and rewards which will take place hereafter, when the moral system, commenced on earth, shall be perfected in heaven. Above all, by this revelation, the state of man, as a fallen and sinful creature, is explained, and the remedy is proposed for his redemption and recovery. The demands of the moral law are plainly set before him—he is convinced of his utter natural inability to perform its demands, and thus is prepared to acquiesce in that message of the gospel, so worthy of all acceptance,—“that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.”

To give a philosophical delineation of this higher logic, by distinguishing its principle, by illustrating its proper method of reasoning, and by ascertaining the peculiar nature and genius of the truth resulting from the whole, is the main object of my present undertaking. For the sake of displaying more clearly and adequately the science of

theology in all its parts, this general Chart of the different kinds of truth was first projected, and the parallel drawn between the logic appropriate to each. We may humbly but earnestly hope, that from such an enlarged and comparative estimate, it may receive the strongest and distinctest light, that thus its study may be facilitated, if not improved, that its truths, being weighed in an equal and impartial scale, may have their full and proper value, and that its superior excellence may be more distinctly ascertained. This plan, if executed with success, promises to lay the deepest and broadest basis, on which to ground and establish the Christian faith<sup>3</sup>.

The departments of learning, which have been the subjects of the preceding lectures, are properly human. This, which comes now to be discussed and illustrated by a comparison with them, is properly divine. As the Creator and moral Governor of the universe is the author of both, and is ever

<sup>3</sup> See p. 72, vol. i.

similar in his operations, and consistent with himself, the one may, in some degree, lead us to a knowledge of the other; and thus however different, nay, and sometimes even contrary to each other, they may serve as mutually illustrative, whether by analogy or contrast. As Newton, from the motion of projectiles on earth, soared with analogic wing to the motion of the planets in the heavens, encouraged by that divine resemblance pervading all the works of God, whether natural or moral, which still exists, even when they appear as contraries or contrasts; even so may the student of theology ascend, from the cultivation of human sciences, to the study of divine. From a logical and comprehensive knowledge of the different branches of human learning, he will derive strength and cultivation of mind, and clearness of comprehension, which will abridge his labour and assist his progress in every part of his sublime profession. Instead of being perplexed by a chaos and confusion of different studies, the bane of all proficiency in good learning, he will know how to apply and improve each to his advantage. Instead

of being embarrassed by an intrusion of subjects from other parts of knowledge, which defeat his reasoning, or disconcert his train of thinking; from the logical acquaintance with all, he will see where the distinction lies, and be able to adapt each, in its proper use, to the great object of his inquiry. Thus instead of wandering from one difficulty to another, in the midst of partial and indigested information, as in a maze of error increased by an indiscriminate glare of light, he will move on with ease and safety, in the serenity of a clear and comprehensive mind. Prejudice, which in narrow conceptions, is always so inveterate and often so invincible, will give place to candour, whilst all partial and minute objections will be lost in enlarged and comprehensive views. The theological student will find the principles of his science on their just and philosophical basis, distinguishing them from those of every other; and, after pursuing that method of investigation which is naturally adapted to them, without deviating into any other, he will embrace with a manly and reasonable assent the stupendous truths of Divine Revelation.



Those which he can comprehend, he will enjoy with gratitude; and those which are above his conception, he will adore in profound admiration.

But, to derive this use and advantage to his studies from such a comparative estimate of theology with the other parts of learning, he should be apprized, that much labour and attention are to be previously employed. To read with care, to think with candour, to judge with impartiality, and to determine for himself, are the first and leading qualifications of the theological student. Many and various are the comparisons to be formed between one science and another in all their correspondent relations,—whilst that of theology should be compared with every other. To form these comparisons with accuracy and success, he will feel the necessity of a competent acquaintance with the circle of the sciences being previously formed. He will discover, that to do justice to this exalted and extensive field of knowledge, which is the object of his cultivation, it is not enough to read over on the one hand, the bulky folios of school-divinity with a dronish and bigoted

industry, embracing whatever is advanced with an implicit assent; nor on the other, to run through the popular volumes of some modern divines, which are calculated to relieve him from the trouble of thinking, or the labour of attention, and to kill an idle hour in all the ease of indolent straightforward reading. The study of theology is both scientific and laborious, and requires above any other an independent and active mind. And whoever may honour these volumes with a perusal, their author presumes to request, that he will take nothing on the authority of the writer, or depend upon his judgment, but examine every thing, and judge for himself; that he will do him the favour not to read them over in an indolent or hurried way, with a view to be merely entertained (in which he will be miserably disappointed); but, that he will look back to different parts of the parallel, and compare them together; that he will examine with freedom, and correct with candour. As a fellow-labourer in the commonwealth of learning, the author will engage on his part, to accept of all improve-

ments with gratitude, and adopt them with simplicity.

With sentiments of deepest awe and reverence, I enter upon this province of sacred truth, which though protected, as it ought to be, from outrage and open violence, by the civil power, is ever to maintain its authority over the minds of men, by its own inherent worth and native evidence. This exalted study is not the less perplexed in all its parts, nor rendered the less difficult in its arrangement and discussion, by the number and diversity of champions, who in succession, have taken this consecrated ground. The society of the learned, in this as well as in all other departments, may be divided into two classes—the one consisting of the few, the other of the many. The former are those bold and enterprising geniuses, who advance before their fellows in the road of science, in the discovery of truth, or the arrangement of method. The latter lag behind, at a humble distance, content with the inferior praise of admiring and tracing their steps, without attempting to advance beyond

them ; patronising their inventions, espousing their opinions, and adopting their errors<sup>4</sup>. The former, who are naturally capable of thinking for themselves, by becoming too much wedded to their own systems and inventions, from which they are unwilling to depart, are often rendered by their success unable to proceed in the advancement of knowledge : whilst a peasant from the plough, with a strong and active mind, undebauched by system, is almost a fairer candidate in the field of literature, than those of the second class, accompanied with all the parade of learning, without any of the power.

Affecting neither to dictate on the one hand, nor implicitly to follow on the other, but soliciting to be examined and improved on these, as I have done hitherto in the departments of human learning, let me here also beg leave of systematic divines, without any disrespect or contempt for their labours,

<sup>4</sup> “ Those which give themselves to follow and imitate others, were in all things so observant sectators of their masters, whom they admired and believed in, as they thought it safer to condemn their own understandings, than to examine them,”—is an observation of the great Raleigh on the learned men of his time.—*Hist. of the World*, chap. iii. § 1.

to claim the privilege of a free adventurer in the search of truth, and to treat this great argument of theology, after my own way. Though truth may be most easily and frequently found in the broad and beaten path, and not the less to be valued, because overtaken in the common road ; yet by following each other in the same unvaried track of formal cultivation, with a sacred care never to deviate from it, philosophers, both divine and human, confirm many errors, without improving many truths : and though, in the other mode of proceeding, errors are perhaps more liable to be incurred, they will sooner be detected ; whilst, from the candour and liberality it professes, they should no sooner be detected, than abandoned.

Theology is the queen of sciences. To her, all the sister-parts of learning should minister and subserve.—“ The virgins that be her fellows should bear her company,”—to cultivate the understanding and prepare the heart, to exalt and purify the imagination for this sublimer service. To train the mind in the gradual search of knowledge, to raise it

as it imperfectly gathers strength, from one subject to another, to direct its progression from science to science ; to facilitate and enlarge its comprehension, whilst the exercise of its faculties is confined within the sphere of their distinct and proper action ; to know its capacity and compass when stretched to their utmost reach, and, above all, to rest contented in the fruition of truth, whatever it may be, or however found,—this is that divine and philosophic discipline by which mortals may best improve and direct their energies. This is the proper end and object of theological study. Whilst it exalts the intellect to the summit of attainable knowledge, it subdues the will to virtue, and engages the imagination as their mutual support and ornament ; and thus, by its admirably useful culture prepares the mind, as a bridal chamber, for the reception and entertainment of those diviner truths, which may hereafter exalt that honour into permanent and substantial glory.



## CHAP. II.

## THE THEOLOGICAL PRINCIPLE.

THE kinds of truth which form the several departments of human knowledge belonging to the different provinces of the theoretic, the practic, and the poetic mind, are the inferences and deductions of natural reason. They result from principles existing in the nature and constitution of subjects, material or mental, to which they respectively relate<sup>1</sup>. And thus a part of that truth, which in the Divine Mind is universal and intuitive, is by the use of sense and reason, conveyed progressively into the human; where it exists, according to the nature of the subjects from which it is derived, and in proportion to the mind in which it dwells<sup>2</sup>.

But truth, as we have observed, is origi-

<sup>1</sup> See vol. i. p. 62.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 9—13.

nally of the nature and essence of God<sup>3</sup>, an attribute of his omniscient mind<sup>4</sup>. Infinite regions and oceans of truth must exist therefore in that universal and unbounded intellect, which sees all things without a medium—which contemplates mysteries beyond the reach of our senses to apprehend, our reason to investigate, or our best faculties to conceive, both from want of principles, and want of capacity.

If the natural operations of the Deity—if the exertions of his power in governing and disposing the material system of the universe by the instrumentality of second causes (which are subject to the senses and capable of experiment), form a labyrinth of dark and difficult investigation to human reason—if, after our ablest and most successful researches, many of the works of nature are only partially discovered, and some remain totally concealed<sup>5</sup>—surely, the moral and intellectual dispensations of his wisdom, those more spiritual parts of his government, which

<sup>3</sup> See vol. i. p. 5, 6.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. p. 9.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. p. 178.

are immediately administered by an act of his omniscient mind, and removed from the observation of external sense, must form a system of more deep and mysterious contrivance, unfathomable in its profounder parts, as the depth of his intellect. All the departments of this sublime dispensation, which lie beyond the reach of human faculties, if they ever become the subject of our knowledge, must therefore be derived into the mind from a principle or ground of evidence, essentially different both from external and internal sense, and communicated by an instrument far superior to that of reason.

Our great philosopher, whose clear and comprehensive mind arranged the departments and marked the confines of all learning, has thus distinguished this principle of divine from those of human knowledge, by a general division—"All knowledge is allotted a twofold information—the one originating from sense, the other from inspiration<sup>6</sup>." And this distinction, so essential to the true foundation of theology, is made by another, who

<sup>6</sup> Bacon. De Augm. Scient. lib. iii. cap. 1.

excels him, as much in divinity of thought, as in sublimity of expression: “Hardly do we guess aright at the things that are upon the earth, and with labour do we find the things that are before us; but the things that are in heaven, who hath searched out, —Thy counsel who hath known,—except Thou give wisdom, and send thy Holy Spirit from above<sup>7</sup>?”

This new principle, by which the mind and will of God, the moral Governor, is immediately dispensed to man, the moral agent, is called *Inspiration*. It is the most direct communication of truth, from the source and centre of all truth. Some few individuals have been so dark in apprehension, so preposterous in judgment, or so perverse in reasoning, as to call in question the possibility of this divine communication. They have been so extravagantly absurd, as to demand the formal demonstration of a universal axiom, which is one of those, (if I may so speak) that demonstrates itself, by

<sup>7</sup> Wisdom, ix. 16, 17.

resulting immediately from the existence of God. To doubt of this important truth, is to insult our Maker, by doubting of his power; and to deny this truth, is to deny that he, who gave men sense and reason, the only means by which natural knowledge is acquired, can convey to them knowledge in another and higher way. How pertinently and powerfully do the inspired writers expose these doubts and sophisms, by a direct implication of its truth, from the power, the wisdom, and the goodness of the Supreme.—“He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? He that formed the eye, shall he not see<sup>8</sup>? He that made the mouth<sup>9</sup>, shall he not speak? And he that framed the mind, shall he not teach man knowledge<sup>10</sup>?”

Appointed the lords and sovereigns of the whole visible creation, and distinguished with many divine and extraordinary gifts; admitted, by the information of the external and internal sense, to the possession of so much knowledge, speculative and practical, and thought worthy of the far higher favour,

<sup>8</sup> Psalm xciv. 9.

<sup>9</sup> Exodus, iv. 11.

<sup>10</sup> Ps. xciv. 10.

to be taken into a near connexion with the supreme Lord and Governor of the universe, by being constituted his moral subjects accountable to himself ; He, who hath bestowed upon men these supereminent prerogatives, who has endowed their understandings with the power of drawing so much knowledge from principles in nature, and of communicating it to each other by human intercourse, He, who hath given them the still nobler prerogative of the will, can, out of the treasures of his wisdom, impart to them other and sublimer truths by his supernatural communication, for the employment of that understanding and the exercise of that will. Who may presume to wonder, that He, who is the fountain of all truth, should communicate to his moral agents such portions of it, as their reason cannot deduce from those material and mental subjects with which it is connected ; especially when he can enlighten the willing mind, and prepare it for their reception and improvement ? His omniscience knows the necessities of his moral agents, created for happiness and enjoyment ; his goodness is ever ready to

supply them. Or who can doubt of his power?—"The greatness of Thy mercy reacheth unto the heavens, and thy truth unto the clouds"<sup>11</sup>!"

The possibility and credibility of divine inspiration, or supernatural instruction, being thus ascertained, let us now inquire into its legitimate authority, as the principle or basis of theologic truth, and consider the nature and constitution of this peculiar source of information on the subject of revealed theology. We may thus be enabled to ascend to the application of this celestial principle, as the foundation of a logic, so different and superior to any which we have hitherto explored, in connexion with other sciences. We may thus also, in some degree, ascertain its superior weight and importance in the scale of moral truth.

—When Mago arrived at the gates of Carthage, charged by the victorious general with the important embassy of the defeat of

<sup>11</sup> Psalm xlvii. 11.



the Romans in the battle of Cannæ, though they did not themselves witness the truth of that great event, the whole senate entertained the welcome news on the relation of the brother of Hannibal ; and on his pouring out, in the vestibule of their house, the rings of the Roman knights who fell in that bloody action, they were fully confirmed of the truth of the intelligence and thoroughly convinced of the important fact<sup>12</sup>. And when Columbus, on his arrival in the western hemisphere, told the Indians that the ships, in which he had sailed over the Atlantic, were made by men ; though they could have no conception how such vast and complicated machines were built, they gave credit to this truth, on the word of that celebrated navigator. Had these different facts not been credited by the informed, their mistrust or disbelief could have made them no less true. They were however credited by both parties, on the authority of their informants. In the first instance, by men, who were capable of understanding clearly the nature of the

<sup>12</sup> Liv. lib. xxiii. cap. 11, 12.

victory of Hannibal, and how it was accomplished from the narration of his brother. In the second, by men, who were incapable of comprehending the complex and artful construction of an European ship, or of conceiving how it could be erected by human power. And whether the nature of the facts related, were understood or not by the informed, was also a circumstance which could not in the least affect their positive truth. They were both however received and credited alike on the testimony of others, and were both equally true.

In similar circumstances are all men placed, from the condition of their nature, in regard to nearly all the truths which affect human life and action. Few indeed are the things which the wisest can discover, or know, or prove by themselves, and were we unaided by the information of others, they would be fewer still. We should then be little wiser than the brutes and without their instinct—less qualified to pass through the world, or to perform our duties in it. Confined within the narrow limits of time and place, possessed of various degrees of knowledge and infor-

mation, and of different capacities and reach of understanding for their acquisition, we are of necessity obliged, in every sphere and scene of life, to rely on the credit and veracity of each other, and to receive the largest and the most useful proportion of truth, of almost every kind, from information and tradition. These are consequently the most common and extensive sources, or channels, of truth ; and whether capable of understanding it or not, men are obliged to found upon them the most important thought and the most eventful conduct. By this borrowed light, they have been led from age to age ; nor, upon the whole, have they reason to complain that they have been led wrong. If such then be the credit and authority of human testimony, so extensive yet trustworthy, as the experience of every one must convince him, in reference to many of the most interesting and important truths of life and conduct ; how properly and how pointedly does the reasoning of the inspired apostle, enforcing, with sublime analogy, the authority of a divine communication, come home to our

self-conviction!—"If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater<sup>13</sup>."

The testimony of God conveyed to man, not by a natural, but supernatural communication, is thus brought down to the apprehension of reason; in other words, reason ascends to the cognisance of the Divine veracity, from its analogy to human testimony. And thus, by reasoning from the testimony of man, to the testimony of God (as Newton from projectiles, to the planetary forces); this transcendent principle of theology is logically and scientifically formed.

The nature of testimony in general, or "the witness of man," as a principle of truth, has been stated and discussed in the former part of this work<sup>14</sup>, where it was found to operate with more universality and extent than any other, being the general vehicle by which truths of every kind are communicated and conveyed. If we here make use of the clue held out to us by the apostle, which leads us from earthly to hea-

<sup>13</sup> 1 John, v. 9.

<sup>14</sup> Chap. iv. and v.

venly things, reason will conduct us safely, by a close and obvious analogy, (the only logic by which divine truths can be conveyed to men), from this human principle, to the divine; from this testimony of men, whence is derived the greatest share of natural or human truth, to the testimony of God;—the source and vehicle of those truths, which are supernatural or divine, and which, being communicated by the word of God, are essentially and necessarily *theologic*.

All truth, whether natural or supernatural, proceeds alike from God, but in different ways, and by different dispensations. However various in appearance or multiplex in form, it is connected like all his works, by a pervading and consistent chain. Of this chain, one main link consists in the principle of testimony, which is common to both; by which, an easy and familiar transition is made, from truths that are human, to those which are divine.

It is not by induction, or by syllogism, but by analogy, that reason arrives at the prin-

ciple of all sound theology ; and it is by analogy, that it is to be cultivated through all its provinces. For, whether the Almighty act through the instrumentality of his creatures, or more immediately by himself ; whether he convey truth to the minds of men through the natural organs of the senses, by the information of others, or by a supernatural communication of his own, he is ever uniform and consistent, so that one part of his divine economy becomes introductory to another, and illustrative of its truth. By this wonderful uniformity, which pervades heaven and earth, earthly things become the expressive types and resemblances of heavenly things ; on which real resemblance, that analogy is founded, which is the great instrument of all supernatural truths, by which alone they can be conveyed to men.—Thus the Almighty instructs men in heavenly and invisible things, which are the objects of faith, by analogical reference to earthly and visible things, which are the objects of sense ; and thus conveys to us a sufficient knowledge of himself, his attributes, and his



actions, by analogous reference to the powers, passions, and actions of mankind<sup>15</sup>.

Such is the true nature and foundation of that logic, which is peculiarly appropriated to subjects of theology, and which has had the sanction and approbation of Him, who is its origin, its instrument, and end.—“ Jesus departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon : and behold a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, ‘ Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David, my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil.’—But he answered and said, ‘ It is not meet to take the children’s bread and to cast it to the dogs.’ And she said, ‘ Truth, Lord : yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master’s table.’ ” This answer to his allusive observation of the children’s bread, possessed a quality so singularly excellent, as to attract from him an animated eulogium, accompanied with the grant of her request :—“ O woman, great is thy faith ! be it unto thee even as thou wilt<sup>16</sup>. ” This answer, so highly applauded and honoured by

<sup>15</sup> Bp. Browne’s Divine Analogy.

<sup>16</sup> Matt. xv. 21, &c.



our Lord, was the result of reasoning by analogy,—that, as the dogs eat of the crumbs of the master's table, after the children are supplied and satisfied; so she, though an alien from the house of Israel, and not entitled to the first overtures of his grace, might hope for some small portion of his superabundant favour, after the children of that house were served. On this rational ground of analogy, sprung the excellency of her faith. And we have another very striking instance upon record, of the same high approbation accorded to this mode of reasoning, and to the effect which it produced.—“ And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto him a centurion, beseeching him, and saying, ‘ Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented.’ And Jesus saith unto him, ‘ I will come and heal him.’ The centurion answered and said, ‘ Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed<sup>17</sup>. For I also am a man set

<sup>17</sup> Matt. viii. 5, &c.

under authority, having under me soldiers, and I say unto one, Go, and he goeth ; and to another, Come, and he cometh ; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.' When Jesus heard these things, he marvelled, and said unto the people, 'I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no not in Israel<sup>18</sup>.'"

The admiration of our Lord was, doubtless excited by the centurion's arguing, from this parity or analogy of reasoning,—that, as one, whose power though infinitely inferior, was vested with an authority by which he could execute his commands, without going in person ; so our Lord's divine and supernatural power was so great, that he could heal diseases at a distance, as well as in his own presence.

These passages of sacred story are memorable and important. From this conviction of the truth of his divine authority, founded on analogic reasoning, the author of our religion pronounced the faith of the parties to be more excellent than any other : and if to these instances of such marked and decided approbation, we add the numerous parables,

<sup>18</sup> Luke, vii. 8, 9.

similitudes, and analogies, which he employed on all occasions to convey his supernatural truths to men, we may infer that this method of reasoning is specially consecrated to the service of religion.

Upon this analogic reasoning, the great principle of all theology is founded—"If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater." From the nature of divine testimony, it can lay hold of the mind of man only by its analogy to human. "This is the witness of God, which he has testified of his Son;" and accordingly, "he that believeth on the Son," as the apostle argues, "hath the witness," the prototype and principle of the evidence, "within himself<sup>19</sup>."

In the kingdoms both of nature and of grace, the God of all truth is wonderfully consistent in the mode of its dispensation; and analogy is the intellectual instrument by which, in one no less than in the other, man is enabled to ascend from earth to heaven. From the curves and motions of projectiles,

<sup>19</sup> John, iii. 10, 11.

we have already beheld the astronomer rising by a sublime analogy, to those of the celestial bodies<sup>20</sup>; as we have seen the theologist rising from the testimony of men to the testimony of God: and as those stupendous orbs, rolling in silent majesty through the vast regions of space, are infinitely more exalted and sublime, than the projectiles by which they are illustrated and explained; so this divine testimony, which is conveyed to the apprehension of man, and made a principle of reasoning by its analogy to human, is infinitely superior, more exalted, and sublime, in proportion as God, in knowledge, fidelity, and all perfection, is superior to man. “The witness of God is greater.”—The word of such a witness must be invincible in power, and paramount to every thing which does not involve a positive contradiction.

The testimony of God, which is in its own nature infallible, is consequently the highest species of evidence, superior to that of sense, or of mathematical demonstration.

<sup>20</sup> See vol. i. p. 149, 156.

He is too wise to be deceived, and too good to deceive. If he will not suffer our senses to be deceived, while well informed, nor our minds to be deceived, in things which they are competent to understand; he will not deceive us in his own immediate revelations—so that there is the same foundation for faith as knowledge, our belief in the divine veracity<sup>21</sup>.

The theological principle being thus logically founded and explained, we shall discover the specific nature and force of the truths resulting from it, by observing the operation which it must produce on the mind, and by comparing it with the principle of other kinds of truth.

That all reasoning is from principles of some specific kind, and that the method which it pursues is governed by the nature of those principles, and productive of a species of truth exactly correspondent and

<sup>21</sup> Reid's Inquiry into the Human Mind, chap. vi. sect. 24.

proportioned to both<sup>22</sup>, is that leading logical doctrine, which this general Chart would illustrate and enforce in every part of science. On comparing the theological principle, with those which have been severally delineated in the preceding volume, in order to weigh the specific operation and effect of each in the just scale of truth; it will be found to differ more from them all, in its logical nature and operation, than any individually differ from each other. Thus it constitutes a new light or inlet of knowledge, and consequently, the truth resulting from reasoning in theology may be expected to produce a different effect upon the mind, and to command a species of assent peculiar to itself.

All other kinds of truth are derived into the understanding, primarily, from the senses external or internal; or secondarily, from the testimony of men, and are called natural. Theologic truth, derived from the immediate impression, or communication, of the Deity,

<sup>22</sup> See vol. i. p. 24 and 63.

is called inspiration, and as distinguished from them, is supernatural<sup>23</sup>. In the former cases, reason begins her operation with particular truths, and rises, by a laborious inductive process, to general conclusions. Thus the secondary principles or general truths are to be applied, by a different operation, to the proof of particular truths. In the latter case, after the general principle is established, reason has no direct concern with the truths at all, which spring immediately of themselves, from the divine inspiration<sup>24</sup>. Her office consists only in the proof of that inspiration, from those internal and external evidences by which it is accompanied, and which, though inseparably interwoven with

<sup>23</sup> It is thus the apostle very accurately discriminates between the principles of metaphysical and theologic truth—"What man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so, the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God."—1 Cor. ii. 11.

<sup>24</sup> In rebus naturalibus, ipsa principia examini subjiciuntur per inductionem, licet minime per syllogismum; atque eadem illa nullam habent cum ratione repugnantiam, ut ab eadem fonte, tum primæ propositiones tum mediæ deducantur. Aliter fit in religione, ubi et primæ propositiones authypostatæ sunt, atque per se subsistentes.—Bacon. De Augm. Scient. lib. ix. cap. 1. [An abridgment of the original. *Editor.*]



it, are to be considered, as essentially distinct and separate from the truths themselves<sup>25</sup>. When the fact of inspiration is proved, the divine testimony, which is the principle of all theology, results immediately from it, and is proved, as the cause is proved from the effect. As, on the one hand, in establishing the principle, reason has no direct concern, but only that which arises from analogy; so, on the other, it has no concern in deducing them from it by any process, beyond that of proving their existence in the sacred records<sup>26</sup>. They are admitted as revealed; and so far as they are revealed, they flow from the principle intuitively, without the intervention of deduction of any kind, and convince the mind, without any other authority than the supreme credit of the witness. They are implicitly to be received, without any operation of the judgment, on the word, or testimony, of God<sup>27</sup>.

<sup>25</sup> See Chalmers's Evidence of Divine Revelation. *Editor*.

<sup>26</sup> Et rursus, non reguntur ab illa ratione, quæ propositiones consequentes deducit.—Bacon. de Augm. Scient. lib. ix. cap. 1.

<sup>27</sup> Prærogativa Dei totum hominem complectitur; nec minus ad rationem, quam ad voluntatem humanam, extendi-

The ground of our assent does not lie in the abstract credibility of the things themselves, but in the veracity of God, who has revealed them. Whether they be revealed more or less fully, they are to be believed, so far as they are revealed, without our even attempting to throw any further light upon them of our own ;—" His thoughts are not as our thoughts," and who may dare either to question, or superadd to the truths by him communicated ? Whether, like the Carthaginian senate, we are able or think ourselves able, to comprehend them ; or, with the benighted Indians, we are unable to form any conception of them at all : since He who hath revealed them, knew for what purpose they were designed, and in what proportion they were to be given ; since he is totally free from error, and equally incapable of fraud or falsehood—who, I say,

tur, ut homo in universum se abneget et accedat Deo. Quare, sicut legi divinæ obedire tenemur, licet reluctetur voluntas ; ita et verbo Dei fidem habere, licet reluctetur ratio. Etenim si ea duntaxat credamus, quæ sunt rationi nostræ consentanea, rebus assentimur non auctori ; quod etiam suspectæ fidei testibus præstare solemus.—Bacon. De Augm. Scient. lib. iii. cap. 1.

may presume to question, or superadd to the truths which He has communicated?

Thus inversely to its procedure, in the various kinds of knowledge which are natural, in theology, reason has no concern with the truths of revelation, either in the direct formation of their general principle, or in judging of them as they are derived from it. "Faith," or the assent which they produce, cometh not by reasoning, but by "hearing, and hearing by the word of God<sup>28</sup>." This principle subsists and terminates in itself. Like its author, it is alpha and omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. —Such is the only true and genuine ΑΥΤΟΨΕΦΑ.

This preeminent principle, the testimony of God, is not only essentially different from mathematical, physical, and all other axioms; but also from the principle of human testimony. From analogy to this, it first takes possession of the mind; but it is needless to observe it is infinitely more excellent and superior in power. Human testimony is a

<sup>28</sup> Rom. x. 17.

principle only of probable truth. It is subject to error in its origin, often vague and precarious in its reasoning, and of various degrees of credibility; but the testimony of God, is in the eye of analogy, as superior to that of man, as the heavens are higher than the earth. Comparing the strength of human testimony with divine, the Baptist, who, like the morning star, was appointed the immediate harbinger of this supernatural light, has displayed its superiority in terms the most emphatic—“He that cometh from above, is above all: He that is of the earth is earthy, and speaketh of the earth: he that cometh from heaven, is above all; and what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth.” He then proceeds to urge the transcendent authority of this testimony—“He that hath received his testimony, hath set to his seal, that God is true. He whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God, for God giveth not the Spirit, by measure, to him. The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hands<sup>29</sup>.”—And this authority is enforced upon the

<sup>29</sup> John, iii. 31—35.

minds of men by the beloved disciple, in very similar terms—"This is the witness of God, which he testifieth of his Son. He who believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he who believeth not God, hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record which God gave of his Son<sup>30</sup>." He then proceeds to state, in a few plain words, the stupendous substance of this record or testimony—"That God hath given us eternal life;" and "that this life is in his Son<sup>31</sup>"—the end and the means of religion. The end worthy of Him, by whom it was designed; the means worthy of Him, by whom they were brought to pass.

Thus theologic truth is essentially different from every other kind; and its effect upon the mind will be proportioned to the divine authority and transcendent superiority of its principle.

Compared with the several kinds, which have been analyzed in the preceding volume, how totally distinct will this be found in its

<sup>30</sup> 1 John, v. 9, 10.

<sup>31</sup> 1 John, v. 11.

constitution, or its operation on the mind ! Though, from the infallible authority and transcendent supremacy of its principle, theological truth be equal in force and conviction to mathematical conclusions, yet in its specific nature it is the very reverse. Whereas they are the deductions from general principles, by a train of reasoning the most syllogistic, elaborate, and extensive of any other ; this results from its principle, without a single intermediate act of judgment. And as all the other kinds of truth which we call natural, claim an assent, in proportion to the nature of their principles and mode of reasoning ; this supernatural truth, when its principle is established on its own independent evidence, commands an assent proportionable to itself, without any reasoning at all. “ He who believeth,” as the apostle suggests, “ hath the witness in himself.” If his mind admit the witness, it must immediately admit the truth (an assent distinguished by the name of faith), which is absolute and intuitive, independent of all the powers of the understanding, the will, or the imagination ; and with which reason has no

direct concern. Its duty is to bring our faculties with all diligence and alacrity to embrace the truth, and in all virtue and humility to acquiesce<sup>32</sup>.

The truths which are the objects of our faith, are on this account distinguished from all other kinds, by the name of *mysteries*. But, as in advancing from truth to truth, we have observed the mind proceeding through a regularly ascending scale, beginning with the lowest and rising higher and higher as it advances; so, in condescension to our natural desires, and to invite men to the enjoyment of the sublimest truths, the dispenser of these mysteries hath made some of them to stoop, or seem to stoop, to the level of our comprehensions. Others, by their sublimity, reach into the heaven from which they came, and are awfully lost to all human sight, in the clouds and darkness which surround "his throne."

On those mysteries which are revealed with so much clearness, as to be brought within the comprehension of the human mind (though

<sup>32</sup> See Lord Bacon's tract on "the Interpretation of Nature," and his *Advance of Learning*, book ii. *sub fine*.



to discover them at first was out of the province of reason, whatever fitness she may find in them, when once revealed), and which seem to be the connecting link between the little we are allowed to know, and the much from which we are excluded, we may worthily employ our meditations. Reason may explain them with simplicity, without prying into them with a curiosity too presumptive, or affecting to give them more light than the Inspirer hath imparted<sup>33</sup>. She may contemplate them with reverence, from a view of the justice and goodness of the Deity displayed in their dispensation, and illustrate

<sup>33</sup> *Humanæ rationis usus, in rebus ad religionem spectantibus, duplex est: alter, in explicatione mysterii; alter, in illationibus, quæ inde deducuntur. Quod ad mysteriorum explicationem attinet, videmus, non dedignare Deum ad infirmitatem captus nostri se demittere; mysteria sua ita explicando, ut a nobis optime ea possint percipi; atque revelationes suas in rationis nostræ syllepses et notiones veluti inoculando; atque inspirationes ad intellectum nostrum aperiendum sic accommodando, quemadmodum figura clavis figuræ seræ. Qua tamen in parte nobis ipsis deesse minime debemus: cum enim Deus ipse opera rationis nostræ in illuminationibus suis utatur; etiam nos eandem in omnes partes versare debemus, quo magis capaces simus ad mysteria et recipienda et imbibenda; modo animus, ad amplitudinem mysteriorum, pro modulo, suo dilatetur, non mysteria ad angustias animi constringantur.—Bacon. De Augm. Scient. lib. ix.*

them by inferences and illations, rather than dive into his secret counsel, by deciding on their fitness with too determined a precision<sup>34</sup>. On those, which lie beyond the sphere of the most enlarged conception, man may think with reverence, and silently adore; not narrowing the mystery to the contraction of his mind; but enlarging the mind, as far as possible, to the amplitude of the mystery. He should view them with all the purest affection of love and admiration, from a consideration of their end; and, in prostrate humility, confess them to partake of that incomprehensible wisdom from which they flow<sup>35</sup>. Reason, by an indirect and secondary operation, may draw inferences and conclusions from these

<sup>34</sup> Quantum vero ad illationes; nosse debemus, relinqui nobis usum rationis et ratiocinationis (quoad Mysteria) secundarium quendam et respectivum, non primitivum et absolutum. Postquam enim articuli et principia religionis jam in sedibus suis fuerint locata, ita ut a rationis examine penitus eximantur; tum demum conceditur ab illis illationes derivare ac deducere, secundum analogiam ipsorum.—Bacon. De Augm. Scient. lib. ix.

<sup>35</sup> “Why,” saith St. Jerome, “do you pretend, after so many ages are elapsed, to teach us what was never taught before? Why attempt to explain what neither Peter nor Paul thought it necessary to be known?”—Ad Pammach. et Ocean. de Erroribus Origenis.

deeper mysteries, according to the analogy of faith, which will afford her an important and extensive scope ; taking care to distinguish between the authority of the inference, and that of the principle. But it is the great duty of the Christian, to regulate both his faith and conduct, by the doctrines and precepts of the gospel or word of God, whether enabled, more or less, to comprehend the grounds and reasons on which they stand. Acknowledging the evidence, by which, as the edicts of heaven they are supported, to be satisfactory and divine ; he will best approve his wisdom and gratitude to God, by yielding an implicit obedience to his laws.

It is the property of those theologic truths, which we term mysteries of faith, that they cannot be solved or explained by the principles or axioms of philosophy, and that consequently, they are subject to difficulties and objections, which reason, proceeding on these principles or axioms, may raise against them, and which, of course, she can never solve. But it ought, in such cases, to satisfy every consistent believer of divine revelation, that his faith is founded on a higher and more

comprehensive principle, and that the difficulty arises from the finite not being able to embrace the infinite. It is the natural result of partial knowledge and imperfect faculties.

Amidst her admiration of the stupendous mysteries of religion, reason may thus be reconciled to her own insufficiency. They are supernatural, and nothing is to be found within the compass of nature to compare them to, in order to conclude. They admit of no middle term. They are divine, and cannot be measured by what is human. They are as first principles, and with first principles reason has no concern. They are given, by the supreme authority of God, not that we may comprehend, but embrace them with all that humility and confidence which is due to One, who hath given us our faculties, and who has assigned their limits. Those who consider reason, not the handmaid, but the mistress of religion, totally mistake both her office and her power. They plunge at once into the depths of error. They do not consider, that reason is only perception and judgment, that perception is much limited

in regard to many of the phenomena of nature, and that judgment, in reference to many objects upon earth, thus with difficulty perceived, is often defeated, and much embarrassed in deciding on the force of the different kinds and degrees of evidence—but “the things which are in heaven, who hath searched out?”

Though the doctrines of faith are to be judged not at the tribunal of philosophy, but at the tribunal of revelation, they are not the less true, because they are mysterious. Their obscurity is owing to our imperfection, which should be no bar to our assent; for the truths of revelation are not proposed for us to know on the conviction of reason, but to believe on the authority of “the Spirit who beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth.” Such is the logical reasoning of St. John, and the reasoning of St. Paul is very consonant: “the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God<sup>36</sup>.”

<sup>36</sup> “Our faith,” observes the learned Stillingfleet, “in relation to these mysteries, stands on a twofold basis: first, that the being, understanding, and power of God do infinitely transcend our own, and that consequently, he may reveal to us matters infinitely above our reach and capacity.

Derived from a divine original, and founded upon a principle which is infallible, as on a rock which the power of men and angels cannot move or subvert, this supernatural truth is theologic ; and the faith, by which it is embraced and entertained, relating to the Son, who “brought life and immortality to light by his gospel,” is the Christian faith, invisible in its object, transcendent in its power, and immortal in its end.

All other kinds of truth, springing from the evidence of external and internal sense, lie more immediately before our view, to direct our way through this material scene of things, in which we are fitly said “to walk by sight.” The kind, which is to conduct us from this visible world into the world of spirits, is derived from “the evidence of things not seen,” and we are accordingly commanded, “to walk by faith and not by

Secondly, that whatever God hath revealed is indubitably true, though we may not fully comprehend it ; for it is an indubitable first principle, that God cannot and will not deceive man by his own revelations.”—*Orig. Sac.* book ii. chap. 8. See also *Stewart's Elements*, vol. ii. chap. 1, sect. 2, 3, on the “Fundamental Laws of Human Belief.”



sight.”—But, however invisible in its object, faith is transcendent in its power, embracing intuitively and at one grasp all the mysteries of religion, however dark and incomprehensible. Independent of the faculties of man, it is devoted solely to the glory of God<sup>37</sup>.—And this transcendent virtue is exalted to still higher consideration, because it leads us to the prize of immortality.—“He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him<sup>38</sup>.” In this grand catastrophe and consummation of human nature, faith, no longer militant, will become triumphant.—“Who is he,”—proceeds the beloved apostle in terms of confidence and triumph,—“that overcometh the world, but he who believeth, that Jesus is the Son of God<sup>39</sup>?”

Such is the nature and constitution of Christian faith, which is the “evidence of things unseen;” and which when “it worketh

<sup>37</sup> Quantum mysterium aliquod divinum fuerit magis absonum et incredibile; tanto plus credendo exhibetur honoris Deo, ut sit victoria fidei nobilior.—Bacon. De Augm. Scient. lib. ix. cap. 1.

<sup>38</sup> John, iii. 36.

<sup>39</sup> 1 John, v. 5, 6.



by love," or Christian charity, in the production of good works, as its genuine fruits, forms the sole and indispensable condition of revealed religion. It is through the obedience of faith, that man, the moral agent, will be justified of God, the moral Governor, redeemed, ransomed, and rewarded,—“having fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.”

This supernatural principle is remote from all others, the truths resulting from it are different from those of every other kind, and result in a different way. But this faith, which transcends every other species of assent, was unknown to Aristotle, whose Dialectic was for ages the impregnable fort of all probable reasoning, the umpire of all learning, and the high tribunal, at which, the pretensions of all truth were to be tried. To punish the vice and obstinacy of mankind in different periods of the world, it pleased “the high and lofty One who inhabiteth eternity,” to permit a cloud to be drawn across the pure light of heaven, by which it was long obstructed and obscured.

If that great philosopher had been blest

with the privilege of beholding the glorious gospel shedding its rays over the Athenian provinces; or had he partaken, with the righteous Abraham, the distinguished favour of seeing, through type, vision, or scenical representation that future day, in which its divine founder sealed with his blood its immortal truth; doubtless the patriarch and the philosopher would have rejoiced together<sup>40</sup>. Instead of that absurd and unphilosophical use of his works, which has been made in almost every age by his servile followers; in the enlargement of his vigorous and comprehensive mind, he would have discarded the definitions, the general propositions, and the formal syllogisms of his useless *Organon*, to embrace immediately this theologic principle, founded in the wisdom, and established on the veracity of God<sup>41</sup>. Instead of disputing the stupendous mysteries resulting from this principle, or ever calling them in question, he would have placed them universally on the same divine inscrutable basis, and have exclaimed

<sup>40</sup> John, viii. 56.

<sup>41</sup> 1 Cor. i. 24.

at once,—“ Lord, I believe ; help thou mine unbelief <sup>42</sup> !” Or had this virtuous native of Stagira been admitted with Paul of Tarsus to the humiliating spectacle of the various opposition, which his Organon, in the hands of men of narrow and contracted genius, enslaved by terms and stupified by forms, would occasion by its use and abuse to the truths of Christianity, or rather to their reception (for against them the gates of hell cannot prevail), and to the establishment of their immortal principle ; had he foreseen the great injury it would effect, in future times, on the wisdom which is from “ above, which is first pure <sup>43</sup>, and then peaceable ;”—by “ ministering foolish questions <sup>45</sup>,” and fomenting rancorous disputations <sup>46</sup>—the philosopher would have lamented with the apostle these profane mixtures of

<sup>42</sup> Mark, ix. 24.

<sup>43</sup> James, iii. 17.

<sup>45</sup> 2 Tim. ii. 23.

<sup>45</sup> Eodem etiam spectant eorum commentationes, qui veritatem Christianæ religionis ex principiis et auctoritatibus philosophorum confirmare haud veriti sunt—divina humanis impari conditione permiscentes.—Bacon. Nov. Org. lib. i.

<sup>46</sup> Qui cum theologiam in artis formam effinxerint, hoc insuper effecerunt, ut pugnax et spinosa Aristotelis philosophia corpori religionis immisceretur.—Bacon. Nov. Org. lib. i.

philosophy and vain deceit, and have laboured with him to guard mankind against them. Could he have heard certain sophists and syllogizers of the Athenian schools, “disputers of this world,” insulting that great apostle with their ignorance and scorn—“What will this babbler say<sup>47</sup>?”—could he have beheld his learned commentator Simplicius, under the full light of Christianity, confirming himself in infidelity, and exulting in opposition; could he have seen the unhappy Porphyry, perplexed and entangled in the subtleties of his logic, and in the act of composing the *Isagoge*, abandoning his faith;—could he have conjectured, that whilst it was raising human reason above itself by persuading it of its all-sufficient power, his hypothetical system would lead it from the most solid truths into the endless maze of speculative error, and that this wild infatuation would inflame the sanguine and promising genius of a youthful emperor, and cause him to apostatize from his religion;—could his eye have reached down to these

<sup>47</sup> Acts, xvii. 8.

distant times, and have observed the cloud of ignorance and superstition, continuing to envelop the greater part of the Christian church, which the evasive versatility of his Dialectic was calculated to thicken and confirm, rather than dispel<sup>48</sup>; or could he have seen that part, which boasts of reformation, still shackled in the pursuit of theologic truth by its sophisms and useless disputations, and by keeping men entangled, from age to age, in the thorny wilds of school-divinity—could he have foreseen these hurtful consequences—instead of committing this portion of his works to the care of the too-faithful Theophrastus, the master and the scholar would have sacrificed them together upon the sacred altar of truth. Above all could he have read, in the Book of life, that heavenly precept—“Love your enemies,”—he would have expunged the con-

<sup>48</sup> “The court of Rome well knew the importance of the school logic in supporting their authority; they knew it could be employed more successfully in disguising error, than in vindicating truth: and Puffendorf *De Monarchia Pontificis Romani* scruples not to insinuate, that they patronised it for this very reason.”—Beattie’s *Essay on Truth*, p. 360.

trary proposition, by which his Ethics are disgraced, as militating against every principle of humanity and sound religion. He would have improved, or abandoned his moral system, as superseded by one infinitely more perfect. His theology, in which he excelled all philosophers before him, if Plato be excepted, would thus have soared on a sublimer wing to the heaven at which it aimed<sup>49</sup>; whilst he would have been content to sit down as a little child at the feet of Him, “who spake as never man spake<sup>50</sup>.”

<sup>49</sup> See the eighth book of his *Metaphysics*, and the last chapters of his *Physics*.

<sup>50</sup> On the various subjects of this chapter, consult Bishop Butler's *Analogy*, Bishop Brown's *Divine Analogy*, and his *Procedure and Limits of the Understanding*, Locke's *Reasonableness of Christianity*, Sykes's *Connexion of Natural and Revealed Religion*, Chalmers's *Bridgewater Treatise*, Sumner's *Evidence of Christianity*, &c.—*Editor*.

## CHAP. III.

## THEOLOGICAL REASONING.

HATH reason, then, no concern whatever in the establishment of faith? and is faith, the ground of theologic truth, that blind virtue, which mortals are to embrace without the consent of the understanding? —To this query we return the following answer.

Although reason has no *direct* concern, either in the act of forming the principle of theology by an inductive process, or in deducing from it the truths of religion by any mediate operation, or in proving these truths from any grounds in nature: yet have the learned been successfully engaged in urging the necessity of the principle of a divine revelation, and enforcing the stupendous mysteries which that revelation



contains. These are topics, which have been successfully urged by the advocates of Christianity, from the natural infirmity of the intellect and the will of man, from the universal fact, verified in experience, by which as moral agents, they are found disqualified both to know and to do the will of their moral Governor<sup>1</sup>. Without such a divine interposition, the connexion between God and his accountable creatures would be practically dissolved, and the original intention of their Creator be virtually suspended. And whilst, in such indirect and collateral conclusions as are founded upon facts, reason may employ her noblest faculties; the truth of the holy Scriptures, which display these

<sup>1</sup> “ Natural reason, contemplating the attributes of the Deity, discovered to us, that when human abilities alone are too weak to support us in the performance and discharge of moral duty, God will lend his helping hand to aid our sincere endeavours, by enlightening the intellect and purifying the will, by impressing upon the first all the speculative and practical truths, which the divine principle of faith contains, and by purifying and supporting the will in the embracing and executing that moral righteousness, the foundation of that faith by which men are to be justified, and to which is annexed the enjoyment of eternal life in happiness.—Warb. Div. Leg. book ix.

See Bp. Gibson's Second Past. Let.

facts, may receive light and confirmation from these conclusions. But though in opposition to the fictions and hypotheses either of deists or enthusiasts, reason may lend her modest aid, in support of the general argument; to judge of the necessity rests solely and properly with God; who, as in creating man at first, so in giving to man his revelation afterwards, has acted from the purest motives of wisdom, prompted by love — attributes which transcend all human thought and comprehension.

To judge of the fact, whether such a revelation, containing such a principle, with its mysteries and credentials, were actually sent from God and received by men, by examining the evidences and circumstances which accompanied it, the time, the place, the manner in which it was delivered, the form in which it descends to us, or in what it is contained, together with its particular substance and burden, and how every part is to be rightly understood—these are the various and extensive topics which constitute the important subjects of theologic rea-

soning, and the proper study of scientific divinity.

This extensive body of reasoning is what a faith which is rational, like that of our holy religion, not only admits, but actually requires. It forms the indispensable duty of all who have leisure and ability for the search, with all diligence, humility, and perseverance to pursue this reasoning. It is the proper and more especial business of those, who for the instruction of Christians, devote themselves to the exalted and honourable profession of divinity, though it should be in a certain degree, the employment of all, who “would give a reason of the hope that is in them<sup>2</sup>.” Nor need mortal man complain, that the use of his reason, in the concerns of his religion, is either precluded or superseded by the still higher prerogatives of faith. These various topics of inquiry and learning open fields of investigation, which may afford ample scope for the ablest exertions of the understanding, to the latest period of human existence.

<sup>1</sup> 1 Peter, iii. 15.

A summary sketch of the grounds and method of reasoning in theology, and of the interpretation of the Holy Scriptures, general and particular—subjects which constitute the study of divinity in its various and important branches,—is all which the comprehensive plan of these lectures permits me to attempt.

## SECT. I.

### *The Grounds of Reasoning in Theology.*

THE principle of theology itself, as well as the truths which it contains, lying beyond the verge of human knowledge, and being totally different from all other principles, and kinds of truth; the specific reasoning, which is adapted to the province of Divinity, will be found, both in its grounds and method, different from every other, in the aggregate.

Wherever general principles are concerned, the reasoning is first *to* the principle, and then *from* the principle; excepting in the

mathematics, where it is chiefly, if not entirely, the latter<sup>1</sup>. In theology, it has been observed, there is no mediate process of reason, by which the truths of religion can be deduced from the principle. It may, however, be properly said, that in divinity, we reason *to* the principle ; but from grounds of a different nature, and in a method totally different from that we use in all the other sciences.

The supernatural principle, which is the ground of theologic reasoning, is not established on an induction of particular truths, by which it is made universal, and from which universality its doctrines are entitled to our faith :—but “ Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God<sup>2</sup>.” In this sentence, the apostle has stated the principle itself, the testimony of God, and the means through which we receive it, *viz.* hearing ; and has laid down the end or effect which it is calculated to produce, *viz.* the conviction of faith. The principle is a divine fact, to be proved from the various means by

<sup>1</sup> See vol. i. part i. sect. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Rom. x. 17.

which it was confirmed, and is conveyed to us. These are the just grounds of theologic reasoning, and these can alone warrant and support a reasonable faith.

Reasoning therefore in theology, respects the means through which the light of revelation was established in the world, whereby the divine testimony was communicated and conveyed down to us in these distant ages. According to the method which it pursues, we shall take the Bible in our hand, which professes to contain this word of God, and trace its history through the intervening ages, and countries, and the persons of its editors, to the time, place, and persons, in which, and by whom it was originally written. This will prove its authenticity.—From the proof of its authenticity, reason may proceed to evince its divine authority, by examining all those various tests and marks of a supernatural commission, which are every where inseparably interwoven with its contents; and which are called the *external* evidences of religion. This authority reason may further confirm, by examining the moral import of its comprehensive argument—the *internal*



evidence of its divinity. By these which are the *means*, reason will be conducted safely and logically to the infallible principle, the word or testimony of God, in which faith immediately finds her repose and end. It will then remain for reason only to interpret the meaning of that mysterious book in which they are recorded.—Or, reason may perform this sacred task, by pursuing the inverse of this order,—ascending, through the internal and external evidences of this authority, to the authenticity of the Holy Scriptures, and thus forming the conviction of our faith on the same firm and solid grounds.

In conducting reason down the descending line, the different grounds on which she argues, the different offices which she performs, or the method she pursues, our train of thought will be something like the following :

All truth is born of God, and as every dispensation of it, whether natural or revealed, proceeds from him, all its parts, however different they may be in kind, are consistent and correspondent members of one



perfect whole. Thus truth is evermore the way to truth ; the less leading to the greater, the inferior to the superior, in a regular but sublime gradation. That the knowledge and certainty of one part, is the only right road to the knowledge and certainty of another, forms the cardinal and fundamental maxim of all sound logic. As, from first and intuitive principles of external and internal sense, human truths are derived of different kinds ; so, by a sublimer effort, from these human truths, as new grounds or principles, reason ascends to those which are divine. Such is the grand connecting link between natural and supernatural knowledge, annexed to the footstool of God, from which depends that golden chain, by which, reason ascends from earth to heaven.

This method of conveying divine truths into the minds of men, by associating them with truths of which they were previously possessed, and these the most natural and familiar, was universally adopted by our Lord, who never stooped to the cumbrous formalities of a useless logic. Instead of defining or syllogizing, we find him perpetually

illustrating and explaining spiritual and heavenly things, by the analogy and similitude of those which are temporal and earthly. Of this conduct of our Divine Master and instructor, I shall here only adduce one example. It illustrates that divine authority on which the principle of theology is logically based, and thus lays down those fundamental grounds, from which we are enabled to reason in divinity.—On proclaiming to the pharisees and scribes, that he was “the light of the world,” and that whosoever followed him should not “walk in darkness, but have the light of life;” in proof of this spiritual and important truth, he does not run into speculative argument or metaphysical discussion, which his hearers could not possibly understand; but he appeals to a public fact, which experience and long usage had rendered familiar to their understanding:—“It is written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true;” from this two-fold testimony, he directly argues to the similar truth of his divine commission: “I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father, who hath sent me, beareth witness of

me<sup>3</sup>.”—But, in his answers and expressions, as more was generally meant than met the ear, we shall find these two heavenly witnesses, in the different evidences which they adduce, in support of this new light of the world, laying these two different and essential grounds of theologic reasoning :

### I. *The Internal Evidence.*

In the same conference with the Jewish doctors, our Lord puts this pointed and decisive question ; “ Which of you convinceth me of sin, and, if I speak the truth, why do ye not believe me<sup>4</sup> ? ” He is in scripture pre-eminently and expressly styled “ the Word,” which Word consists of the doctrines which he taught,—of which he was himself the subject ; and of the precepts which he delivered, of which he was himself the pattern. “ Which of you,”—said he, in this important view of himself,—“ convinceth me of sin ? ” For the truth of what he said, of his doctrines and of his precepts, he appealed,

<sup>3</sup> John, viii. 17, 18.

<sup>4</sup> John, viii. 46.

by this pointed question, to that moral truth, which his hearers had acquired in a natural way, and were convinced of from the principle of internal sense. He draws a proof of his own divine mission, from the eternal difference of good and evil, virtue and vice, written by the hand of God on the hearts of men, to be among other uses, a familiar and standing witness of his Son. He infers, and teaches all men to infer, that, if upon examining his Word (“the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person<sup>5</sup>,”) by this native unerring witness, it be found perfectly consistent with their best ideas of the goodness of God, and superior to their best ideas, it must, in all reason, be also consistent with the sister attribute of his Truth, and thus far worthy of all acceptance:—“And if I speak the truth, why do ye not believe me?”

Thus it is, by the evidence of moral truth, deduced in a natural way, from the internal principle of conscience<sup>6</sup>, that reason is enabled to form a decisive judgment of the

<sup>5</sup> Heb. i. 3.

<sup>6</sup> See vol. i. chap. vi. sect. 2.

subject matter of revelation ; which is therefore, if not properly to be called a principle, a sufficient ground of solid reasoning in matters of religion, and this we call its internal evidence. On this ground, let the theological student exert his keenest powers in accurately and minutely sifting and examining the moral departments of scripture. In the discharge of this duty, the syllogistic logic with all its parade of modes and figures will prove of little service. It may puzzle and perplex, it will not assist him. A competent knowledge of moral science, with a sound head and a sincere heart, will form his best aid in this arduous and interesting task. Could any thing be found in Scripture, as taught or enjoined of God, which when fully understood, palpably contradicts his moral attributes, as they are discovered by the light of conscience and natural reason (which are our first, and as far as they go, true and real lights) ; could any thing be found, which is vicious, immoral, and sinful, opposed to his very being : he might safely conclude, that it could not proceed from Him, who is the author of good and not of evil.

But on the contrary, if the whole religious dispensation, both doctrinal and moral, display that superabundant mercy, goodness, and good-will to men, which exceed all human conception, and which must be divine, —it affords a most strong presumption, almost amounting to full and positive proof, that it assuredly came from heaven.

The doctrines of our religion, founded essentially in the unsearchable wisdom of the Godhead (to judge of which attribute of the divine nature, the whole order of intellectual beings and their relations should be taken into account), are transcendently sublime, and some of them far beyond the highest reach of our understanding to compass, or our imagination to conceive. But, to be convinced of the great mercy and goodness which they effectuate to the human race, the sole relations to be considered, are those between God and man, and these are easily and clearly to be understood<sup>6</sup>. These attributes, shining upon the face of the whole Christian dispensation with the benignest influence,

<sup>6</sup> See Warb. Div. Leg. book ix. p. 26.

discover to natural reason conspicuous marks of its divine extraction; holding out “a bright and shining light,” by which we behold, in its constitution, the hand of an immaculate original. “The law of the Lord is an undefiled law, converting the soul; the statutes of the Lord are right and rejoice the heart. The commandment of the Lord is pure, and giveth light unto the eyes.” This is a species of evidence, which is mixed and interwoven with the vitals of our religion, and inherent in its very substance—“The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth<sup>7</sup>.”

Thus the perfect theory of that moral virtue, which was transcribed into the life and actions of “the Author and Finisher of our faith,” is to be found in the records of the Holy Scriptures, and constitutes their first credential and foundation. Such is the order, beauty, harmony, and consistence, which pervade the whole of God’s moral government,

<sup>7</sup> John, i. 14.



and conspire to the perfection of the heavenly system.

By this internal evidence of his word, addressed to the hearts and consciences of men, Christ was, therefore, “one who bore witness of himself,” as the Divine Messenger of the new covenant<sup>8</sup>.

## II. *The External Evidence of Miracles.*

But, however necessary and fundamental this species of evidence may be to a religion, which assumes to have come from God, it is not sufficient, of itself alone, to evince the authority of a divine commission<sup>9</sup>. Our

<sup>8</sup> On the internal evidences, see Locke's Reasonableness of Christianity, Soame Jenyns, Beattie, Leland, Sumner; and, above all, carefully study and inwardly digest the profound “Analogy” of Bishop Butler.—*Editor*.

<sup>9</sup> “In reverence to truth, I hold myself obliged to own, that, in my opinion, the reasonableness of a doctrine pretended to come immediately from God, is, of itself alone, no proof, but a presumption only, of such its divine original: because, though the excellence of the doctrine (even allowing it to surpass all other moral teaching whatsoever), may show it to be worthy of God, yet, from that sole excellence, we cannot certainly conclude that it came immediately from him; since we know not to what heights of moral knowledge

Lord therefore appeals to another, though not more essential, more obvious and convincing test, which stamps an irrefragable seal on the heavenly embassy,—“And the Father who hath sent me beareth witness of me.”

To call the attention of men to this latter evidence, as more obvious to their apprehension, and in itself more palpable and direct, he uses this strong, though indirect language : “If I bear witness of myself, my witness is

the human understanding, unassisted by inspiration, may arrive. Not even our full experience, that all the wisdom of Greece and Rome comes extremely short of the wisdom of the Gospel, can support us in concluding, with certainty, that this Gospel was sent immediately from God. We can but doubtfully guess, what excellence may be produced by a well cultivated mind, further blessed with a vigorous temperament, and a happy organization, of body. The amazement into which Sir Isaac Newton’s discoveries in nature, threw the learned world, as soon as men became able to comprehend their truth and utility, sufficiently shows, what little conception it had, that the human faculties could ever rise so high, or spread so wide.

“On the whole therefore we conclude, that, strictly speaking, there is no ground of conviction, solid and strong enough to bear the weight of so great an interest, but that which rises on miracles, worked by the first messengers of a new religion, in support and confirmation of their mission.

“That is, miracles and miracles only, demonstrate that the doctrine, which is seen to be worthy of God, did, indeed, come immediately from him.”—Warb. Div. Leg. book ix. chap. 5.

not true<sup>10</sup>," (being only the "testimony of one," and therefore insufficient of itself), proceeding in the same peremptory and pointed style,—“There is another who beareth witness of me, and I know that the witness which he witnesseth of me is true. The works that the Father hath given me to finish, even the works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me; and the Father himself, who hath sent me, hath borne witness of me<sup>11</sup>.”—“If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works; that ye may know and believe that the Father is in me, and I in him<sup>12</sup>.”

This second witness of his mission to which Christ appealed, which he calls *works*, were the most plain and obvious facts, intimately connected with his doctrines and precepts, as collateral vouchers of their divinity. After estimating the internal or moral evidence, it is the next office of reason to canvass the pretensions of revelation upon the ground of

<sup>10</sup> That he speaks indirectly, is obvious from another passage in St. John's Gospel, where speaking directly, he contradicts these words—"Though I bear record of myself, my record is true."—viii. 14.

<sup>11</sup> John, v. 31, 32, 36.

<sup>12</sup> John, x. 37, 38.

these external concomitant facts. These are usually called “the external evidences of Christianity.”

The nature of facts, as a species of truth, was analysed in the first volume of this work, to which I must now recall the attention of my reader. They are those human truths, by which the author of our religion leads men immediately to the belief of its divine mysteries. This species of truth was found to be more direct and obvious than any other ; open to the apprehension, and familiar to the minds of all men ; resulting immediately from the individual objects presented to the eye, the most perfect of the senses ; springing from effects themselves, without attention to their remoter causes ; and requiring nothing for their proof, but the coincidence of transaction, person, time, and place, or for their conviction, but that the senses be sound, competent, and well-informed. And from their frequency and incessant occurrence in the ordinary course of human affairs, facts are not only most obvious and familiar in themselves, but also in their secondary and efficient causes<sup>13</sup>.

<sup>13</sup> See vol. i. p. 203.

These are the proper topics for the theological student to canvass and examine, in this important department of divinity—but in which, he can derive little assistance from the logic of the schools. The inductions of facts are not to be determined by modes and figures. It is here, that the “Short Methods of Leslie with the Jews and Deists” will afford more assistance, than the entire Organon of Aristotle.

The facts which our Saviour laid down, as the original ground of evidence, by which men might be convinced of the truth of his religion, were as palpable to the senses, and easy to the apprehensions of all men, as it is possible for any facts to be. They were witnessed by men of the most artless, simple, and unambitious character, yet who were very slow and cautious in giving their assent, and who could gain nothing from yielding to their convictions, but the hatred, derision, and persecutions of their cotemporaries<sup>14</sup>. The facts themselves, however, differ from the most common and ordinary that occur in the natural course of things,

<sup>14</sup> See Paley's Evidences, vol. i.

only in one particular ; which difference was as clearly to be apprehended by the plainest conception, as the facts themselves. And it is this important difference to which they owe their evidence ; for whereas other facts are the effects of common and ordinary causes, these were still more obviously the immediate effects of a most uncommon and extraordinary cause.

From the operation of this uncommon and extraordinary cause, not producing new phenomena in a natural way, but doing wonderful and particular acts, and producing wonderful and peculiar effects, in a supernatural manner ; these facts, appointed as the concomitant proofs and evidences of the religious dispensation, were called *signs*, *powers*, or *miracles*. They were, indeed, such “ works as no man can do, except God be with him,” whose all-wise and perfect nature could not employ such stupendous means to sanction a delusion, or to impose on his moral agents ; but to confirm and establish the most important and beneficial truth.

These “ signs ” which were done by Jesus,

in the presence of his disciples, however plain and obvious to the senses of the spectators, were like all other facts<sup>14</sup> “transient and confined to time and place.” To keep up their memory and effects, they were therefore written and recorded by their first witnesses, that others might believe<sup>15</sup>.

These miracles, though new and different from the ordinary and uniform experience of men, and the common effects of common causes, and on that account the less credible in themselves; yet, being the only adequate credentials which could confirm to men the testimony of God and the divine commission of his Son, and absolutely indispensable to the ends of a dispensation so important as to involve the happiness of the human race, derive a credit both from their singular necessity, and the singular importance of their final cause. When thus supported by human testimony sufficiently authentic, they are entitled to the belief of all future ages<sup>16</sup>. They were also pronounced and declared by

<sup>14</sup> See vol. i. p. 196.

<sup>15</sup> John, xx. 31.

<sup>16</sup> “A miracle, even when best supported by human testi-



their author, the person who was invested with the supernatural power of performing them, and who communicated to others the same power, to be expressly given as the standing test, the broad seal, of his divine

mony, needeth to be still further qualified, ere it can deserve credit of a rational believer: namely, that it be so connected with the system to which it claims relation, as that it seem to make part of it, or to be necessary to its completion.

“It is otherwise in facts acknowledged to be within the verge of nature and human agency. Here, all that is wanted to recommend them to our belief, is the testimony of knowing and honest witnesses.

“While in pretended facts beyond the verge of nature and human agency, such as those we call miraculous, much more is required when offered to our belief. The control and arrest of the established laws of nature, by the God and Author of nature, either mediately or immediately, is a thing which common experience hath rendered so extremely improbable, that it will, at least, balance the very best human testimony, standing unsupported and alone. And why? Because ordinary facts carry their causes openly and manifestly along with them; or if not so, yet none are required, as we are convinced their causes must be intrinsically there. But in facts assumed to be miraculous, the immediate efficient cause is extrinsical; and therefore leaves room for doubt and uncertainty: or rather, when, in this case, men perceive no cause, they are apt to conclude there is none; or, in other words, that the report is false and groundless. So that when the whole evidence of the fact, deemed miraculous, is solely comprised in human testimony, and is in its nature contrary to uniform experience, the philosopher will at least suspend his belief.

“But though in all miracles, that is, in facts deemed miraculous, the efficient cause continues unknown; yet, in those

commission, to which they were so indispensable; and to complete their attesting power, they were essentially and inseparably connected with the most important part of the dispensation, and of the truths them-

which our holy religion seems to recommend to our belief, the final cause always stands apparent. And if that cause be so important as to make the miracle necessary to the ends of the dispensation, this is all that can reasonably be required to entitle it to our belief; when proposed to us with the same fulness of human testimony, which is sufficient to establish a common fact: since in this case, we have the moral attributes of the Deity to secure us from an error so fatal to our welfare.

“And the confining our belief of miracles within these bounds, wipes away (as I conceive) all the miserable sophistry of our modern pretenders to philosophy, both at home and abroad against miracles, on pretence of their being contrary to general experience, in the ordinary course of things. At least, the true philosopher [Mr. Locke] so thought, when he made that strict inquiry into truth, towards the conclusion of his immortal work.—Though common experience, (says he) and the ordinary course of things have justly a weighty influence on the minds of men, to make them give or refuse credit to any thing proposed to their belief; yet there is one case, wherein the strangeness of the facts lessens not the assent to a fair testimony given of it. For where supernatural events are suitable to the ends aimed at by Him, who hath power to change the course of nature, then, under such circumstances, they may be fitter to procure belief, by how much the more they are beyond or contrary to ordinary observation. This is the proper case of miracles, which well attested, do not only find credit themselves, but give it also to other truths, which need such confirmation.”—Warb. Div. Leg. book ix. chap. 5.

selves<sup>17</sup>. “The works, which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me.”—“If ye believe not me, believe the works.”

To extend their attesting power to all future ages, these miracles were inseparably interwoven with the most important parts of the divine dispensation itself; that both might be recorded together, and so intermixed, that the truths could not be heard, or read, without the evidence, nor the evidences without

<sup>17</sup> “We come next to that second species of miracles whose subject makes so essential a part in the economy of the gospel; that, without it, the whole would be vain and fruitless. The first and principal of this species is the miracle of Christ’s resurrection from the dead. ‘If Christ be not raised (saith St. Paul), your faith is vain; you are yet in your sins.’ And St. Peter uses the same argument to show the necessity of his Master’s resurrection—‘God (says he) raised him up, having loosed the pains of death; because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.’—If Christ himself was not seen to enjoy the fruits of that redemption, which was of his own procuring, what hopes could be entertained for the rest of mankind? Would it not have been too plausibly concluded, that this expedient redemption had proved ineffectual by Christ’s not rising? So necessarily connected (in the apostle’s opinion) was the miracle of our Saviour’s visible resurrection with the very essence of the Christian faith—

“Thus, we see, the miracle of the resurrection made a necessary part of the integrity of the gospel.”—Warb. Div. Leg. book ix. chap. 5.

the truths, with which they are inseparably connected. The forgiveness of sins was one of the most important truths of the heavenly dispensation ; and on seeing the faith of the paralytic, who was let down upon his bed through the roof, our Lord pronounced that his sins were forgiven him. This high act of his divine authority, raising the astonishment of his hearers, the Scribes and Pharisees ; to convince them of its truth, he immediately coupled it with a miracle, which he purposely transacted before their eyes, that, from seeing the one act of supernatural power, they might be convinced of the other. Knowing, as he did, their secret thoughts upon the occasion, he asked them this pointed question—“ Whether is easier to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee ; or to say, Arise and walk ?” And then, that from seeing the miracle, they might be convinced of his power of forgiving sins, he said to the paralytic, “ Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thy house ;” which the man joyfully did, glorifying God<sup>18</sup>. In this instance, as in many others, the miracle

<sup>18</sup> Luke, v. 18—25.

sprang out of the doctrine which it was immediately given to attest ; and the doctrine was fully confirmed by the miracle ; since he who was empowered to perform the miracle, could not teach what was untrue.

But to complete their attesting power, some of these miracles were not only inseparably interwoven with the truths, but formed an essential part of the truths themselves ; as in the instance of our Lord's resurrection from the dead, which constitutes a necessary part of the gospel dispensation, as the full and final test both of the forgiveness of sins and the resurrection of the dead—the two cardinal doctrines of the Christian faith. Thus, whether from the emergency of the case, the authority of the agent, or their own self-importance they derive the strongest and most befitting credibility.

Such is the plain and easy apprehension of the nature and use of miracles, in their connexion with the fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith.—But some losing themselves in the mazes of a sceptical philosophy, possess the unhappy talent of puzzling the plainest things ; and what is a greater evil,

they allure others into the toils in which they have been taken; who vainly struggling to get free, entangle themselves the more, till the whole becomes a maze of perplexity and error.

By this external evidence of works supernaturally performed, “the Father also, who had sent him, bore witness of him.”

Founded on the plainest testimony of the internal and external senses, thus clear and convincing are these grounds of evidence. The first, are inherent in the very vitals of the religious dispensation; the other, essentially connected with it. To both conjointly, our Lord appeals as evidence of the truth, which he brought down from heaven, to become the “light of the world,” in that concise and expressive declaration,—“I am one who bear witness of myself, and the Father, who hath sent me, beareth witness of me.” And, when the blind obstinacy of his prejudiced and perverted hearers closed their eyes against the blaze of this twofold light; with that dignity and sublimity of character which distinguished all his deeds and words, he condemned their aggravated blindness, in this



summary and decisive sentence—" And now have they seen and hated both me and my Father<sup>19</sup>."

These two grounds of reasoning, from external and internal evidence, though essentially different, are conjointly indispensable to the establishment of that divine testimony, which is the infallible principle of all revealed religion, mutually supporting and supported by each other—the internal purity of the doctrine proving, that the miracle which accompanied it was wrought of God; and the divine power of the miracle proving, in its turn, the divinity of the doctrine<sup>20</sup>.

<sup>19</sup> John, xv. 24. On the external evidence, see Lardner, Paley, Bishop Douglas's " Criterion," &c.—*Editor*.

<sup>20</sup> " So little being known of the powers of created spirits superior to ourselves (some of which we are taught to believe are beneficent to man, and some averse), all that we can conclude of miracles, considered only in themselves, is that they are the work of agents, able in some instances to control nature, and divert her from her established course. But whether this control be performed immediately by the God of nature, or by agents acting under his direction, or on the contrary by malignant agents, at enmity with man, and, for a time, permitted to indulge their perverse and hurtful purposes, cannot be known, but by the nature of that doctrine, in support of which the pretended miracles are performed. The conclusion from this, is, that the miracles are to be verified by the doctrine. But since we know so little of the



### III. *The Evidence of Prophecy.*

In addition to the supernatural power of miracles, exercised by Christ and his apostles, for the rational foundation of his religion; in the same interesting conference with the Jewish doctors, our Lord appealed to another ground of external evidence of a different and more complex kind, in which the same transcendent power was as conspicuously, and still more wonderfully displayed. —“Search the Scriptures, for in them, ye think ye have eternal life; and these are they which testify of me<sup>21</sup>.”

Such is the evidence of *prophecy*, founded

extent of the human understanding, we cannot determine of the true original of the doctrine proposed to our belief, till it be supported by miracles: now the conclusion from this is, that the doctrine is to be verified by miracles.

——“In this there is no fruitless return of an unprogressive argument, but a regular procession of two distinct and different truths, till the whole reasoning becomes complete. In truth, they afford mutual assistance to one another; yet not by taking back what they had given, but by continuing to hold what each had imparted to the support of the other.

“On the whole, we conclude, that if any messengers ever wanted the credentials of miracles, they were the first messengers of God in the revealed mystery of the gospel.”—Warb. Div. Leg. book ix. chap. 5.

<sup>21</sup> John, v. 39. Compare Rev. xix. 19.

on a natural truth, which is evinced by the experience of men in every age—That the knowledge of future contingent events is beyond the reach of all human foresight ; and consequently, that when the prediction of such events is verified by facts, a divine interposition must obviously have been made for some important purpose. To attest the truth of a supernatural revelation was frequently declared by our Lord himself, and the other illustrious persons who were favoured with this divine gift, to be that important purpose ; nor can we doubt the truth of this declaration, when made by those who were commissioned with the power, and intrusted with the means.

The evidence of prophecy is of vast variety and extent, though connected in one marvellously consistent chain. It has accompanied the dispensation of theologic truth, from the earliest ages before the personal advent of Christ ; in whom, as in a centre, the whole was united. It is still extended and enlarged by him and his apostles, so as to accompany this truth through succeeding ages with its attesting power, even to the end of the world.

The vast extent of this evidence from Adam to Christ, precludes even the most distant suspicion of its being the concert or contrivance of man ; for how is it possible to conceive, that there could be a combination, among the prophets of such different and distant times ? Had it been a forgery contrived by different persons, in different ages, how could they so exactly and minutely concur in one single point—"the testimony of Jesus?" This is a manifest impossibility, and most strongly proves, that they were all inspired "by one and the same Spirit." Such evidence, for these reasons, St. Peter thought stronger than that of miracles derived from the outward senses. It were easier to suppose that the senses of the apostles might have been deceived, than that Adam, Abraham, Moses, David, and St. John could have concerted together<sup>22</sup>.

This is a most fruitful and germinating branch of theological study, in which the learned divine will meet with an extensive and sublime employment. This species of external evidence displays the wondrous skill and

<sup>22</sup> See 2 Pet. i. 16—21.

profound contrivance of its author. Its events are connected with each other, and distributed through all ages, to the termination of the whole religious scheme ; yet so involved in darkness, that the most penetrating eye cannot foresee them, till they eventually come to pass. The powers of the human mind are then lost in astonishment, at their exact correspondence with the predictions. Meanwhile, the works of the most eminent writers on prophecy afford striking proofs of this supernatural contrivance. Their most sagacious interpretations are perpetually contradicted by the succession of events. They thus evince the impenetrable veil which overhangs unfulfilled prophecies—but whilst they discover their own fallibility, they preserve attention to the general argument, and thus keep alive the force of its evidence. In this field of study, the office of the theologian is difficult and delicate. It does not consist in anticipating events, in which his imagination will lead him into a labyrinth of error ; but rather, in studying the language of prophecy, and attending, with a watchful eye, to the history of events and changes, as they succes-

sively occur, and thus to classify events with their predictions, when they are found clearly to correspond. But to expatiate in this field of prophecy, would extend these lectures far beyond the limits of the plan prescribed.—Yet we may incidentally observe, that it is by induction, not by syllogism, such studies are to be prosecuted.

With one or other of these external evidences, the Christian church hath been supplied, according to its different circumstances and occasions, as they were best adapted to the purposes and progress of its dispensation. Miracles, striking immediately upon the senses, were best calculated for the first planting of a new religion; but they could not be continued through future ages. By being perpetually repeated, they would in time have lost their very nature, and consequently their evidence. When miracles began to be withdrawn, prophecy began to operate, which could not produce an immediate effect on the first witnesses, as requiring time, after its enunciation, for its accomplishment. It was thus prepared to become their substitute,

and is, on that account, styled by St. Peter “a light shining in a dark place.” With us, consequently, in these later ages, it is the “surer,” and more lasting evidence. Whilst we have miracles only on record, losing perhaps something of their force by time; we have prophecy, in some part of its course, in the act of completion, and growing more and more convincing, till by the germinant luxuriance of its branches, and the gradual ripening of its fruit, its force becomes irresistible.—It is thus, that prophecy is gradually converted into history.

By this divine arrangement, “the sovereign Master, who no less manifests his constant presence to the moral, than to the natural government of the world, has been graciously pleased to give to these later ages of the church, more than an equivalent for what he had bestowed upon the earlier; in beginning to shower down on his chosen servants of the new covenant, the riches of his prophecy, as the power of working miracles abated—and hence, the wisdom of the divine Dispenser is still further seen, in making prophecy, not only the strongest, but the last and con-



cluding evidence of a religion, which, as it was the conclusion of the whole scheme of revelation, so, having (as it should seem) the largest portion of its course to run, that species of evidence, which does not lose, but gain strength by time, was best fitted to accompany it, to its utmost period<sup>23</sup>."

As miracles formed a necessary supplement to the moral evidence, so this vast chain of prophecy, fulfilling and to be fulfilled, confirms the truth of those miracles, in which it originated, and whose absence it supplies. How wonderfully do these predictions co-operate in one great design, forming together a magnificent and stately system, an extensive fabric of evidence, equally to be admired for the symmetry and support of all the parts, and the harmony and composition of the whole.—Such is "the unity of the Spirit;" such "the power and wisdom of God;" such "the testimony of Jesus," which is "the spirit of prophecy"<sup>24</sup>."

<sup>23</sup> Warb. Div. Leg. book ix. chap. 6.

<sup>24</sup> On prophetic evidence, see Sherlock, Hurd, Mede, Newton, Davison, &c.—*Editor*.



These external evidences, by which the divine testimony of the Bible is established, and which form the grounds of a rational faith, are not only calculated for the purposes of different men, according to the times and circumstances under which they are placed ; but require a different train and method of reasoning, in their proof and authentication.

#### IV. *The Evidence of Types.*

There exists also a still further kind of external evidence belonging to Christianity, from the types and figures of the Old Testament, as realized in the New, and which, taken in its whole amount, is very considerable. It is a species of evidence altogether peculiar to our religion. It proceeds on the principle, that such a regular and orderly series of resemblances, carried on from Creation to the birth of Christ, could not have resulted from accident, that it denotes the finger of God, and the operation of divine superintendence. Thus the sacrifices of the Jews were highly typical of the one great sacrifice to be offered for the sins of the world. The rock, the

manna, the brazen serpent, the feasts of Passover and Pentecost, the institution of the Sabbath, the first Adam as corresponding to the second, the strong resemblance of Abraham, Moses, &c. to the personal character of Jesus,—all these types and figures betoken something quite distinct from the facts of other histories. They mark out a dispensation harmonious in all its parts, in which times, and places, and all the circumstance of individual character, are brought into correspondence with one vast design. And such resemblances, be it remembered, are appealed to in the New Testament, as forming a ground for the evidence of the truth of Christianity, and of the reality of Christ's mission; and that consequently we are fully justified, in adducing it as part of that evidence. But the great canon for the theologic student to observe is this,—that no type can be established without such scriptural authority, whilst others are to be viewed only as ornamental or instructive illustrations<sup>26</sup>.

<sup>26</sup> See Conybeare's Bampton Lectures; Butler's Analogy, part ii. chap. 7; Jortin on the Truth of the Christian Religion, chap. 3.—*Editor*.

To the eye-witness of the facts, called miracles, which were performed by Christ himself, the evidence was so palpable and direct, that, where the mind was candid and well-disposed, they produced an immediate and full conviction of the whole truth of his doctrine, as the testimony of God.

To the primitive Christians, who were not such eye-witnesses, the evidence was indeed in one degree removed. Their conviction, however, flowed from the immediate report of the eye-witnesses, or at least from that report, at second hand ; which testimony was indeed directly confirmed to them, by the eye-witness of other miracles,—“ the Lord working with his servants, and confirming the word, with signs following<sup>27</sup>.” In this case, reason had a very short and easy process.

In the succeeding age, when the canon of the New Testament was completing under conduct of inspiration, these evidences were confirmed by recent facts, performed in times not far remote, by persons who were known in places where the parties lived, and

<sup>27</sup> Mark, xiv. 20.

published by the same, in such times and places, as the original miracles had been enacted, challenging all who could to contradict them. The conviction of the early Christians was founded on the sacred writings thus recently attested, and on the inspired authority of their respective authors, which could be clearly proved. This evidence of fact and history was directly confirmed by prophecies, which were then beginning to be fulfilled, and especially by the fall of Jerusalem. In this case, reason had a somewhat longer operation, but the effect was vivid.

We, in these distant ages, exist under very different circumstances both of time and place. The era, in which the truths of Christianity were revealed, and its evidences exhibited to the world, and in which both were committed to written record, is many ages removed, and we live in countries far remote. This evidence therefore must necessarily come down to us through the protracted channel of human testimony.

But if we have not such immediate and direct external witness of Christianity, we have what may be called its *monumental* evidence,

arising from its long preservation amidst surrounding difficulties, its triumph over persecution, its moral benefits on nations, its harmony with the growth of science and civilization, and the utter improbability, that it can ever be overturned by the opposition of its enemies, or even by the infirmities of its friends and adherents; above all, we have the standing evidence arising from the Jewish history.—But this monumental evidence extends itself also into the heart and conscience of every faithful individual. It is the witness within ourselves of the truth of Christianity, resulting from its sanctifying effect on our hearts and lives. This is what the Scripture denotes, “by the Spirit bearing witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.” Thus the evidences, by which both the authority of revelation and the inspiration of the Scriptures are established, are not only calculated, as we have observed, for the use of different men in different ages, but now require a different train of reasoning from that which belonged to the primitive church.

Since we are now indebted to the testimony of men for that testimony of God

which forms the primary principle of our faith, the study of Christian theology is necessarily based upon history, which opens an extensive and laborious field of reasoning and critical discussion.

The method which reason should adopt in this extensive department of theology, consists in a logical train of historical investigation, to establish a series of important facts<sup>28</sup>. Now, the first fact which presents itself to the theological inquirer will be—Whether the senses of the immediate witnesses of the supernatural facts and evidences of this divine commission were sound and well-informed, clear and competent judges of truth, and subject to no fraud or imposition<sup>29</sup>? And to this, another will succeed as its counterpart—Whether their credit may be relied on, as faithful and honest relators<sup>30</sup>?—These two facts, in their joint affirmation, constitute the requisite qualification of a true witness and faithful narrator, neither deceived himself, nor intending to deceive others; without

<sup>28</sup> See chap. v. sect. 1, vol. i.

<sup>29</sup> See p. 208—210, of ditto.

<sup>30</sup> See p. 214—219, of ditto.



which, as a primary qualification, any history may prove either a fallacy or an imposture.

The immediate witnesses, or their immediate friends, the appointed instruments of the divine testimony in all its parts, were specially and divinely commissioned, and aided by a supernatural power, to commit the whole substance of its truth and evidence of every kind, to written record. They were also enabled, by divine assistance, to add whatever was necessary, by way of explanation, prophecy, or exhortation, to complete the whole dispensation of grace to man; that “the faith of future ages might stand not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth.”

Of the originals, or autographies, of this written record, forming the canon, executed under this infallible guidance, it hath pleased Divine Providence to deprive us. Having shared the fate of all such ancient originals, we have now only their copies, which have been transmitted by human means. But the Divine Wisdom has no doubt guarded this sacred deposit by the invisible eye of its especial care.



The Scriptures inform us, that Christ established his church upon earth, against which the gates of Hell should not prevail, to remain among other purposes, the standing witness of their own purity and authenticity. Upon the testimony of the church, extended and confirmed from one generation to another, we receive the Scriptures at the present day, which testimony we are to examine, as we do that of other facts, till our judgment is satisfied, without embracing them upon any authority which the church may have assumed. We are to judge of the authenticity of the Scriptures, as we would of any other writing, by examining into the plain evidence of facts, without attending to any extraneous authority. The fact is, that the canon of the New Testament was formed, while the autographs of the apostles' writings were still in existence, and their authenticity publicly and concurrently acknowledged; so that it was settled at the time, when it could be established by full evidence, and whilst the notoriety of the facts was felt by all. And as the church spread itself into so many branches, stretching into different countries, we have

received it down, from that time, in copies so universally disseminated throughout Christendom, that it was impossible to add or detract from it, or to change any part, without a general detection of the forgery by all the churches in the world. And thus the testimony of the Christian church becomes the public warrant for the authenticity of those Scriptures, which form the rule of Christian faith ; as the Jewish church previously was the witness of the authenticity of the Scriptures, which form the canon of the Old Testament.

The questions which arise under these circumstances will therefore be—I. Whether the originals themselves were the genuine productions of those immediate witnesses or their immediate friends, whose names they bear.—II. Whether these productions had actually the seal of Divine Inspiration ? On this decision, depends a most important and extensive subject of theological inquiry and learned investigation.—III. Whether those manuscripts and books, which contain the copies, with their ancient versions, editions, and quotations in different languages, be the faithful transcripts of the originals ?

And, to conclude this preliminary department of the study of theology,—as these numerous manuscripts, translations, editions, and quotations are found, upon comparison, to differ from each other, though in no very essential points, yet in numerous particulars of smaller account ; another subject of nice examination and critical judgment opens itself to the student, in an extensive collation and comparison of correspondent texts ; to investigate, as far as possible, the mutilations, additions, and alterations, which may have arisen through fraud, ignorance, or accident, and by an able and impartial decision, to restore the true and genuine text<sup>31</sup>.

Thus long and laborious is the way which leads fallible men, in these distant ages, to the infallible principle of theology. On these grounds of judgment, which form the commonest truths of common life, derived from the internal and external senses, and from the

<sup>31</sup> See Bishop Marsh's Lectures, and his Translation of Michaelis ; Lardner's Credibility ; Jones on the Canon, &c. —*Editor*.

documents of sound and authentic history (which may be considered as primary principles, from which we reason to the divine testimony, as secondary), the truth and certainty of the Christian religion are firmly built. Reason, as we have more than once observed, can only judge of evidence; and such evidences are the best, they are indeed all, which the nature of that religion, being purely divine and spiritual, separate from all human and earthly things, can possibly admit: and whatever be the opinions of men, they were thought by Him, who gave us that religion, sufficient for our information and conviction in every age. They are, in all respects, calculated to vindicate the goodness, and display the mercy of God, “whose ways are not as our ways, nor his thoughts as our thoughts;” who, whether we may be able to discern them or not, knowing himself what cause will produce the designed effect, ever employs the fittest means to accomplish the end he has in view; and who has taken especial care, in every part and under every circumstance of his revealed dispensation, that “our faith should stand,

not in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God."

By such a method of extensive and various reasoning, philosophically instituted and logically conducted, and upon such grounds, may be established a rational and sublime theology; just as, in a different province, the fabric of natural philosophy is erected upon physical and experimental principles. This is the theology, which, as the tower on a rock, may defy in every age the assaults of infidelity. After the most accurate and critical inquiry, the acutest discernment, and the profoundest learning, which have been repeatedly exerted on the one hand; after all, which the keenest acumen, the subtlest artifice, and the deepest sophistry, could object on the other, upon a subject of the greatest and most universal concern, what has been the general result?—The Christian religion has been established and confirmed, as much by the attacks of its bitterest adversaries, as by the defences of its ablest advocates. Upon these grounds it has gone on conquering and to conquer, triumphing over interest and ambition, igno-

rance and learning, friends and foes, the superstitions of popery and the false logic of the schools. Reason and sound philosophy are the allies, on whose honest and faithful service she may depend. In every age and country, civilization and science have erected their standard in her cause. They banish error and superstition, scepticism and infidelity, from her shrine ; and rejoice to place that faith, which is the pure offspring of heaven, in the legitimate seat of the heart and understanding<sup>32</sup>.

<sup>32</sup> On the various subjects of this chapter, consult Leland on the Advantage and Necessity of Revelation ; Porteus and Ryan on the Beneficial Effects of Christianity ; Millar's Bampton Lectures ; Benson's and Millar's Histories of Christianity ; Conybeare's Defence of Revealed Religion ; Leland's Deistical Writers ; Berkeley's Minute Philosopher ; Sumner on the Creation, &c. &c.—*Editor*.



## CHAP. IV.

## THE STUDY OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

WHEN, by establishing the infallible principle of theology, the testimony of God, that sacred fountain from which the mysteries of religion spontaneously flow, reason has cleared her way to the foundation of our most holy faith ; the treasures of the sacred volume still remain to be gathered with diligence, and preserved with care, and to be so faithfully and plentifully distributed among men, that they may be enjoyed by all, who are willing to embrace and to improve them, in the readiest and most effective manner. This opens another field for the exercise of reason in the province of theology, in which the devout student will find additional and different employment.

We are thus brought to the second general



object of inquiry, viz. the proper study of the Bible.

The Holy Scriptures are the sole repository of all the mysteries of religion, doctrinal and moral, comprising the whole form and substance of theologic truth. They are styled “the oracles of God,” speaking and declaring his will to every age and country, in a language, which though sometimes plain and express, is at others, mysterious as the truths which they contain. They constitute the sole and universal spring, whose living waters are to flow pure and unadulterated “for the healing of the nations,” to the end of time. The critical study and analysis of every part present the sublimest subject of rational investigation to the mind of man.

In this portion of theology, the act of reasoning becomes an act of interpretation, in the conduct and execution of which, the deepest learning, the maturest judgment, the ablest criticism, the most extensive information, and, I may add, the purest taste, will find ample scope for their exercise and improve-

ment. But to qualify the student for the successful execution of this various and important task, his mind should be cultivated and prepared, by a general and comprehensive view of the Holy Scriptures, which should form his first and most essential study. And as, in the prosecution of every inquiry, it is of the first and greatest importance to set out in the right and straightforward road ; so, by adopting that method of study, which is philosophically and logically just, we may save much fruitless toil, and be most successful in our pursuit.

That, however infinite and various in his truth, “ the Lord our God is one Lord,” consistent with himself and uniform in operation, and that one part of his truth is everywhere introductory to, and illustrative of another, is the solid foundation of that logical analogy, from which the natural system of the universe becomes a key to the moral, and by which the philosophic inquirer is enabled to explore the celestial regions. A right knowledge of the dispensation of nature will therefore furnish us with the clue, which may lead us to the right knowledge of that of

grace : and by placing them side by side, in a comparative estimate, we shall discover that the true method of interpreting the one, will introduce us to the true method of interpreting the other. “Two books or volumes of study,” says our great philosopher, “are laid before us, if we would be secure from error. First, the Scriptures, revealing the will of God ; and then, the creatures, expressing his power, whereof the latter is a key unto the former<sup>1</sup>.” The display of himself, in the great volume of his works, will open to our understanding the display of himself, in the smaller, but more precious volume of his word. The economy of the one will illustrate and unfold the economy of the other, and thus the successful study of both may be conjointly prosecuted.

Impressed on every thing around, we observe, in the natural system of the universe, the power, the wisdom, and the goodness, of the Deity ; they meet the eye in such bold and prominent relief, as to force themselves on

<sup>1</sup> Bacon. *De Augm. Scient.* lib. 1. See also Bishop Butler's *Analogy*, and Bishop Brown's *Works*.

the minds of the most torpid and uninformed. In addition to these convictions of the Divine attributes, the knowledge also of the general use of such things, as are necessary for the subsistence and convenience of human life, is easily attained. All the domestic and social benefits, which are requisite for the personal security and comfort of mankind, are extracted and derived with ease, from the various materials with which we are surrounded. Thus obvious is the book of nature, in its most useful pages, to the plainest understanding.—With like clearness and simplicity, the fundamental truths of Christianity are disclosed to all. The great duties of faith, obedience, and repentance, which are sufficient to “make men wise unto salvation,” are plainly and distinctly taught in almost every page of the sacred volume; whilst every moral virtue and obligation is inculcated with a clearness and simplicity, to which all uninspired morality must yield.—So openly hath the universal Father dealt with all men in both his dispensations; leaving nothing concealed, which is necessary or expedient for the instruction of the

ignorant and unlearned (who in all human society must ever form the great majority), either in the use of things, which contribute to the comfort of this present life; or in that religious information and moral duty, in which, their future happiness is involved.

But, however plainly these Divine attributes may impress themselves upon the general and superficial attention of all men, or, however easily the most common use of common things may be discovered; it is only to the eye of the philosopher, penetrating by accurate and experimental observation, into the deeper recesses of nature, in the various parts of her extensive volume, that this Divine power is displayed in all its force, this wisdom unfolded in all its glory, and this goodness shines forth in all its beauty;—that all those latent causes are disclosed, which, in the mechanism of the material system, produce such various and astonishing effects. Yet is the moral dispensation, however clear and obvious in its general truths and duties, replete with far deeper and sublimer mysteries, than the natural. The volume of inspiration is professedly mys-

terious, demanding the deepest investigation of the learned in every age, particularly of those, who are appointed, by more than human authority, to be the dispensers and interpreters of that Word, which is adapted to employ their study and industry, to the end of time.

However clearly its fundamental articles may be delivered to the apprehension of all, the Christian dispensation is prophetic and parabolical in its style and character. Its particular evolution in the different periods of the world, the future fate and fortunes of the gospel and the Christian church, which are called “the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven,”—will ever remain a subject for the investigation of the ablest and most profound research.

Thus obvious, at the same time, mysterious is the God of truth in his different dispensations. Whilst both in his works, and in his word, he is so open and perspicuous, that “he who runs may read,” when he is addressing the information and conviction of those, whose faculties are usefully and



honourably employed in the necessary occupations of life ; this deeper investigation, either into the constitution of nature or the economy of grace, is allotted to the virtuous and vigorous exertions of the inquisitive and contemplative ; to be rewarded with the high gratification of intellectual improvement, and crowned with the still higher satisfaction of communicating to others the result of their labours.

Similar and analogous as they are in their whole economy, when we are engaged in the study and cultivation of the systems of nature and of grace, similar causes will often be found to produce similar effects of ill or good success ; and the right method to be pursued in one, will frequently suggest the best course to prosecute in the other.

Systems and hypotheses framed by philosophers out of their own ideas, divorced by the force of imagination from the truth of facts, were long the bane of natural philosophy, and the prolific cause of all the errors, which for centuries opposed the advancement



of physical science. Disdaining the drudgery of experiment, and the painful task of accurate inquiry and individual observation for the principles of inductive truth, philosophers were pampering their indolence and indulging their vanity in dreams and speculations of their own invention. Hence in their interpretation of nature, instead of unfolding a real world, the image of its Author, they produced a number of ideal creations, from the pregnant womb of fancy, no less diverse from each other, than equally unrelated to himself. And to keep pace with these imaginative interpreters of nature, their ingenious brethren the school divines, instead of searching the Scriptures for the truths which they every where contain, by a grammatical and truly critical, which is always a laborious, examination, were as inventively, but more mischievously employed, in erecting similar schemes of doctrine and hypothetical systems of divinity. These were as contradictory to each other, as abhorrent to the discoveries of the one Inspirer of the one true religion.

Correspondent to the genius of these visionary systems in theology and science, was

the logic engaged in their service. Logic, in those speculative ages, disdained to stoop to the laborious office of investigating truth. As imagination could more readily invent, than reason investigate, the task of discovering truth was allotted to the former, whilst the latter had only to forge artificial weapons for attack or defence. It furnished both the philosophical and theological combatant with a suit of magic armour of such dexterous contrivance, that the champions of different theories could attack or defend, with such equal success, as never to injure or destroy their opponents, and thus for ever to contend with an equal show of conquest on either side<sup>2</sup>. It was only just, that such easy and ingenious systems should possess such easy and ingenious dialectics. Consisting of terms of its own, to which by an

<sup>2</sup> *Hæc inutilis subtilitas sive curiositas duplex est, et spectatur aut in materia ipsa, qualis est inanis speculatio, sive controversia, cujus generis reperiuntur, et in theologia et in philosophia, haud paucæ : aut in modo et methodo tractandi. Hæc apud scholasticos fere talis erat : super unaquaque re proposita formabant objectiones ; deinde objectionum illarum solutiones, quæ solutiones, ut plurimum, distinctiones tantum erant, &c. — Bacon. De Augm. Scient. lib. i.*

arbitrary, though formal definition, were annexed what ideas it pleased, without regard to the truth of facts; this scholastic logic could make every phenomenon of nature bend to every hypothesis, and distort every text of scripture to the support of any system of school divinity.

Upon such a foundation and by the help of such an instrument, was erected that Babel of the schools in philosophy and theology, which was alike the pest of science and religion; and which, for so many ages, threw its dark shade over the whole of Europe. To these misguided studies, more than to any other cause, may be attributed the continuance of the gross and irrational errors and superstitions of the church of Rome. Polemical divinity, consisting of a number of hypothetical and artificial questions, agitated on both sides with all the sophistry of disputation, and in a language, as unintelligible to a rational understanding, as that of the ancient Babel after the confusion of tongues, was the legitimate offspring of such theology and such logic. Universities adopted this art, as the main object of their study

and cultivation ; in the exercise of which, instead of opening the scriptures in a just and candid interpretation ; their theological disputants, by handling the word of God artfully and deceitfully, scarcely found a text in scripture, which they did not pervert and misapply, in defending their own dogmas and inventions, or in subverting those of their opponents. Instead of employing their reason soberly and discreetly to the useful purposes of theology, they contaminated its most sublime and sacred mysteries, by an impure mixture of metaphysical speculation. These fabricated questions produced an inexhaustible fund of polemical contention, (of error there is no end), and though paraded by the schoolmen, as of the last importance to religion, they were “ foolish and unprofitable ” at best ; and so exactly descriptive of those “ vain babblings, profane novelties of words, and oppositions of science falsely so called<sup>3</sup>,” against which St. Paul has cautioned his disciples Timothy and Titus, as to warrant the supposition, that he foresaw the

<sup>3</sup> 1 Tim. vi. 20.

folly, and foretold the conduct of this learned ignorance of distant ages<sup>4</sup>.

But what was more than all inauspicious to the study of theology and the pure interpretation of the word of God, these scholastic systems and disputations, from the prejudice of education and the prevalence of habit, inflamed by the heat of party zeal, by an insensible contagion warped the understanding of men of superior learning and sounder judgment. Hence, in their translations, interpretations, and commentaries of the Holy Bible, instead of representing the meaning of the original faithfully, critically, and candidly, they could scarce avoid giving it a colour of their own, to favour the sect or dogma to which they were inclined.

Thus the study of physics and divinity,

<sup>4</sup> Qua in re [litigiosa subtilitate], increpatio illa Paulina, non magis ad suam ætatem referri, quam ad sequentia tempora deduci, potest, neque Theologiam tantum, sed etiam omnes scientias respicere videtur. "Devita prophanas vocum novitates, et oppositiones falsi nominis scientiæ." His enim verbis, duo signa scientiæ suspectæ atque ementitæ proponit. Primum est, vocum novitas et insolentia; alterum rigor dogmatis, qui necessario oppositionem, et dein altercationes quæstionesque inducit, etc.—Bacon. De Augm. Scient. lib. i.

instead of being the just interpretation of nature and the Scriptures, which are the works of God, became the invention and support of systems, which were the fabrications of man. The honour of the philosopher and divine consisted, in a pertinacious and obstinate adherence, to the systems in which they had been bred, or in standing forward, with the pride and formality of a contentious logic, invincible champions in their defence ; just as a mercenary soldier is bound to fight and to die under the banner to which he has once engaged.

From these causes, so inauspicious to the progress of good learning, neither of these studies made any material advance for many ages, till the sublime genius of Lord Bacon chalked out a new and different road, by the discovery of a sounder logic, for the study and interpretation of nature. He gave also such clear and collateral intimations, in regard to the study of the holy Scriptures, that a few philosophers and divines magnanimously embarked in the cause of truth. These, in despite of the statutable and formal disci-

pline, have gone hand in hand in emancipating reason from the bonds of artificial system, and upon experimental and scriptural grounds have been alike successful in the interpretation of the volumes of nature and of grace.

The success which originally crowned the labours of the philosopher in this new line of cultivation, gave encouragement to the divine to pursue a similar plan of study<sup>5</sup>. Some of the ablest divines of the church of England have employed their learning and labours, after this rational and scientific method, much to the honour of their profession, and to the great advancement of the first of sciences. What has been so ably and auspiciously begun in this theological reform, it is incumbent on their successors to pursue and finish. Avoiding the extremes of scepticism and superstition, of licentious speculation and blind credulity, it is full time to embrace and second this reform, in every part of our public discipline, by adopting the most judicious and proper means. It is time to turn

<sup>5</sup> See Introd. to book ix. of Warb. Div. Leg.



our backs with shame on the fabricated systems and absurd positions of artificial and hypothetical divines, who have usurped or infringed the prerogatives of scripture, and to explore the Bible itself, that pure and genuine treasury, that inexhaustible fund of sound theology. If systems be formed, let them be constructed only on a scriptural foundation. It is time, in short, to change, to shut up, or to pull down the schools, those monuments of the ignorance of past ages. It is time to abandon disputation and altercation, which at best are useless and unprofitable, and instead of contending about questions of science falsely so called, to go hand in hand in pursuit of the genuine prize ; advancing with modesty, candour, and discretion ; and following truth, not for the sake of triumph, but with an eye to charity. And under the direction of such a leader and logician, as our own country has produced, we need not despair of prosecuting our inquiries in the volume of nature, or in that of grace.—But let us not examine, with an eye too bold and daring, into the deeper mysteries of religion, that inner sanctuary, that holiest of holies,

wherein the Deity alone resides, and into which he has forbidden us to intrude.

Yet, whilst “the secret things belong to the Lord our God, the things, which are revealed, belong to us and to our children for ever<sup>6</sup>.” “Let no one,” says Bacon, “taking to himself the credit of a sobriety and moderation ill applied, think or maintain, that men can search too far in the book of God’s word, or in that of his works, in theology or philosophy. But rather, let them excite themselves to the search, and boldly advance in the pursuit of an endless progress in either; only taking heed, lest they apply their knowledge to arrogance, not to charity; to ostentation, not to use<sup>7</sup>.”

Thus the kingdoms of nature and grace are as two parallel lines following the same direction, but which can never be made to touch. These studies, by a general and close Analogy, reflect light upon each other, and are to be successfully cultivated in a similar way. But in their separate prosecution, that

<sup>6</sup> Deut. xxix. 29.

<sup>7</sup> Bacon. De Augm. Scient. lib. i.

great maxim of all sound logic,—never to mix and confound them together,—should be most sacredly observed. The neglect of this maxim will be shown, in some future stage of these lectures, to be a fundamental cause of error<sup>8</sup>. And another admonition, with which that great reformer of learning concludes the above remark, is too important

<sup>8</sup> To this mixture of these different parts of learning, we may trace the origin of Hutchinsonianism, that strange infatuation, by which the judgment of a sect of very learned and worthy men, led away by whim and fancy and from want of proper strength and comprehension of mind, has been astonishingly betrayed; whom Warburton, in his rude style, denominated “a cabalistic crew, blind workers in dirt and darkness.” Lord Bacon, who knew the proper nature and saw all the just dependencies and independencies of the different parts of learning, and what assistance they could mutually impart, has not only warned us against this mixture and confusion in general, but has stigmatized this particular evil, in the directest words—*Alter excessus ejusmodi præsupponit in scripturis perfectionem, ut etiam omnis philosophia ex earum fontibus peti debeat, ac si philosophia alia quævis, res profana esset et ethnica. Hæc intemperies in schola Paracelsi præcipue, necnon apud alios invaluit. Initia autem ejus a rabbinis et cabalistis defluerunt. Verum istiusmodi homines non id assequuntur quod volunt; neque enim honorem, ut putant, Scripturis deferunt; sed easdem potius deprimunt et polluant.—Quemadmodum enim theologiam in philosophia quærere, perinde est, ac si vivos quæras inter mortuos: ita, e contra, philosophiam in theologia quærere, non aliud est, quam mortuos quærere inter vivos.—De Augm. Scient. lib. ix.*

in the study of divinity, to be neglected—  
 “Taking care again, not to mix and confound these distinct parts of learning, theology and philosophy<sup>9</sup>.”

<sup>9</sup> Bacon. De Augm. Scient. lib. i.

The most beautiful and correct illustration of this admonition of Bacon is to be found in the “Analogy” of Bishop Butler, which cannot be too often, or too earnestly recommended to the theological student.

N. B. In the application of the inductive method to the study of revealed theology, we should be careful of adhering strictly to the rules and limitations which Bacon has himself laid down. It should consist in a diligent and comprehensive comparison of all its doctrines, so far as they can be brought to illustrate each other, ever remembering, that we can only know any thing of a divine revelation, so far as it is revealed, and so far as our limited faculties will permit us to interpret its discoveries.—Still, “the analogy of faith” will carry us a considerable way, and the unity of divine truth will greatly assist us. The complete systems, whether of nature or of grace, we can only “know in part”—but enough may be known to show the wisdom, the goodness, and the glory of their almighty Author.

That the inductive method is not strictly applicable to the peculiar principle of theologic truth, see page 20–28; and that it is, in some measure, superseded by the more extensive range of analogic reasoning, see page 9, 27, 33. But, under these modifications, the inductive *mind* may be safely recommended to the student of scientific theology; ever premising the preliminary monition of Luther,—“bene orâsse, est bene studuisse.”—*Editor*.

## CHAP. V.

THE GENERAL INTERPRETATION OF THE  
SCRIPTURES.

**T**HAT the Holy Bible, both in matter and form, is a book totally different from all others which ever were, or could be, written, is a position founded on this great and eternal truth, that “the thoughts of Him,” by whom it was dictated, “are not the thoughts, nor his ways, the ways of men.” And hence will arise this important corollary, that the Holy Scriptures require a different method of interpretation from that which is employed in any other volume.

In the volume of his grace, as in that of nature, the Almighty hath hidden under a veil the treasures of his wisdom, to furnish employment to the studious; whilst he has opened those of his goodness and grace, for the

use and enjoyment of all. Though its interpretation has been the task of many ages, as a mine unexhausted and inexhaustible, it is calculated, as we have observed, to exercise the skill and ingenuity of the learned to the end of time.

The Fathers and earlier commentators of the church filled the world, with annotations upon the books of the sacred volume ; but, whether from the use of imperfect copies and inaccurate translations, or from a partial and unphilosophical method of interpretation, no great light has been reflected upon the Bible, from their numerous lucubrations. Instead of collating and correcting the text in the first place, and of establishing, in the second, some just and general rules of interpretation ; their labours were wasted, in framing notions and inventions, which are often as absurd in themselves, as repugnant to the original. Their learning was frequently misemployed in labouring every trifling particular, with a great variety and extent of explanation, whilst they generally overlooked things of real and general importance, and their minds were

darkened by the mist of that cumbrous logic, which obscures every thing which it surrounds. We need not therefore wonder, if their scriptural comments be of little use, in leading us to the genuine interpretation of the sacred code<sup>1</sup>.

In addition to these general defects, commentators of later date became the bigots of religious persuasions, or the slaves of technical systems, which warped or obscured their partial judgment. The tyranny of the Romish hierarchy was, at any rate, to be maintained, all theological truth was to be made to bend to its worldly interests. To support these, the scholastic logic was found a most useful instrument. By a taint early contracted in a scholastic education, and confirmed by narrow habits of thinking and reasoning, each sect became the furious antagonist of another, whose main object was to confute their opponent's ingenious and partial interpretations and support its own. Interpretation

<sup>1</sup> On the strange interpretation of the Fathers, consult Daille, Barbeyrac, and Whitby; but to avoid an extreme, read Warburton's masterly preface to Julian, or Collinson's Bampton Lectures.—*Editor*.



thus assumed the character of disputation, and instead of critical explanations and luminous remarks, the sacred commentators are filled with private bickering and systematical altercation. Refinements on words and phrases, perverted by the subtlety of invention into every shape, occupied the rest of their bulky labours. Things the most obvious and direct they often wrest from their meaning, whilst those, which are involved in real difficulty, are left to remain undisturbed in their obscurity. “The Schoolmen,” says a great author in the reign of Elizabeth, “spinne, into small threds and subtle distinctions, many times the plainesse and simplicitie of the Scriptures: their wits, being like strong water, which eateth through and dissolveth the purest gold.—For God knows, what a multitude of meanings the wit of man imagineth to himself in the Scriptures, which neither Moses, the prophets, or apostles, ever conceived<sup>2</sup>.”

And thus, however much may have been written, much remains uninterpreted, and nei-

<sup>2</sup> Raleigh's History of the World, chap. ii. § 1.

ther from the number of the commentators, nor the bulk of their productions, can we infer, that the Scriptures are yet explained. In consequence of this partial, this frivolous, this contentious mode of interpretation, most of the huge folios, with which the presses of Europe have groaned for ages, are replete with unmeaning jargon, interspersed with unedifying disputations, and abounding with uninteresting remarks.

That, out of the vast heap of annotations of matter and mixture of every kind, raked together by the dull industry of the older and later commentators, some things valuable should not be found, would be a paradox unprecedented in the course of human events. Few men there are in any profession or sphere of life, who say much upon topics which they profess to understand, without saying some things well. There are some lights, which shine from the surrounding heaps of darkness and confusion, like diamonds out of the immense rubbish of the mine, worthy of preservation for the elucidation of this mysterious book. The interpreters of future ages are indebted to the

indefatigable industry of a collector<sup>3</sup>, whose laborious “Synopsis” has brought together every thing worth preserving; by which he has saved the trouble of diving into a vast and tumultuous sea, wherein the few pearls to be found would scarcely reward our labour and research.

With these scanty advantages, derived from the voluminous lucubrations of former times, a ray of brighter hope has dawned upon the Bible in these later ages, from the more rational and philosophical method of study, and that candid and liberal inquiry, which do honour to the present scientific and enlightening era. It is now, that men of diverse educations, countries, and persuasions in religion, eminent for learning and of indefatigable industry, abandoning the contentions, and despising the bigotry of former ages, unite as Christians, in one great and common cause. Instead of labouring to confound and perplex, they are anxious to aid and assist each other; whilst, to the credit of learning and themselves, they go hand in hand, in the same

<sup>3</sup> Poole.

honourable walk, with Truth for their guide, and Charity for their companion.

Impressed with an awful sense of the authority of the sacred volume, and of the importance of its immortal argument, the honest interpreter will shake off the bias of prejudices however inveterate, of opinions however sanctioned, and of passions however constitutional, and thus bring to the work, the atmosphere of a pure and impartial mind. Instead of wasting his labour upon a number of minute and less significant particulars, or of refining away plain and obvious sense, by the subtleties of a narrow and corrosive intellect ; it will be his first object to institute a theological inquiry into the general design and purport of the written Word ; and, from principles and instructions, fully contained and fairly understood, to illustrate the true nature and genius of the religious dispensation, in all its parts. He will mark the difference between the first and second covenants, that of works and of grace, and observe the connexion which subsists between them. He will trace the temporary economy of the

Old Testament, and weigh the nature and import of the partial covenant with the Jews, observing with astonishment, how it was made introductory “of better things to come.” He will then follow it through the law and the prophets, in its marvellous evolutions, till he beholds this vast and preparatory machine of Providence, crowned and completed in the eternal Gospel. The New Testament, the last and noblest part of the religious dispensation, he will afterwards study, in the sacred pages of that Gospel, with redoubled attention; contemplating, with purest love and profoundest admiration, the divine foundation on which it is built, the supernatural means by which it was executed, and the immortal end which it has in view.

On this general foundation, all the subordinate labours of the sacred interpreter should be formed, as the design which they are destined to illustrate and display. Great and awfully sublime is the task of the theologist in this most important department of his profession—a task, to the adequate performance of which, many are the acqui-

sitions, qualifications, and accomplishments indispensably requisite, and various and extensive the studies to be pursued<sup>4</sup>.

### I. *The learned Languages.*

The languages in which the books of Holy Scripture were originally written, and into which they were early translated, constitute the first object of the interpreter's study and attention, as being the proximate matter of all theologic truth. The book which records the testimony of God, is only to be accurately and scientifically understood, in its original and primitive form.

Nor are these languages to be studied in a careless and superficial way. They should be pursued radically and grammatically through their inflections and variations, their dependencies and connexions, their dialects and changes. To a competent knowledge of the grammar and vocabulary of each, the student should call in the assistance of the best

<sup>4</sup> See Shuckford and Prideaux ; also Daubeny's Discourses on the Connexion of the Old and New Testament ; Stillingfleet's Origines Sacræ, above all, Butler's Analogy.—*Editor.*



lexicons, commentaries, and concordances. These will enable him to understand their peculiar genius and structure, their anomalies and analogies, their relations and differences from each other<sup>5</sup>.

The primitive languages of the Old Testament are too little known, and cannot be too accurately and minutely studied by the theological student. Deeply convinced of the vast importance of this ancient oriental learning to the better knowledge and illustration of the Scriptures, learned men of different universities in Europe have applied themselves with great assiduity to their grammatical and critical investigation. Since this part of theological literature has been so zealously undertaken and so ably conducted, we may congratulate ourselves upon the extensive and accurate collations of the sacred writings, and hope to receive an improved and uniform translation of the whole, the fruit of their joint and honourable labours. We would admonish them to guard, with

<sup>5</sup> See Bishop Marsh's Lectures, parts 1, 2.



especial care, against the corruptions, frauds, and impostures, which have been practised by the Jewish Talmudists upon the Hebrew text, and to use the LXX version, as the polar star to guide them to the truth.

The genius of the Greek tongue, in which the New Testament was written (in which, we have a very ancient and invaluable translation of the Old, which for some ages before St. Jerome, was thought by the learned, to have been aided in its formation by more than human skill, and which was certainly sanctioned by Christ and his apostles<sup>6</sup>, by their numerous quotations), “is universal and transcendent, and, from its propriety and universality, made for all which is great and beautiful in every subject, and under every form of writing<sup>7</sup>.” Nor can it ex-

<sup>6</sup> Some years since, the editor had occasion to institute an exact inquiry into the quotations of the Old, in the New Testament, and he ascertained the number to be as follows: There are, in the whole, two hundred and forty-five quotations; of which, one hundred and ninety-three are taken literally from the LXX; thirty-one agree with the Hebrew, and the rest vary, more or less, from both.

<sup>7</sup> Harris's *Hermes*, p. 423.

cite surprise, that the Holy Ghost should employ the most perfect language which ever existed, to become the general vehicle, to convey and disseminate the treasures, both of the Old and New Testaments, and to remain the standing monument of religious truth, through all future ages. The Greek tongue is, therefore, of far more importance to theology than all other languages. It is capable of a more precise and adequate expression, of being more distinctly and accurately understood; and, what is more than all, it is universally applied, that is, by taking the Septuagint as a part of the sacred code, whose words and phrases are uniformly adopted in the New Testament, and whose authority is sanctioned by that application. The Greek tongue is thus co-extensive with the whole of sacred writ; so that by mutual reflection, one part may receive and communicate light to another, which is the true key of all scriptural interpretation<sup>8</sup>.

<sup>8</sup> On the peculiar style of the New Testament, in its connexion with the Old, the work of Bishop Jebb should be carefully studied, as an admirable continuation of Bishop Lowth's Lectures.—*Editor*.

The Latin tongue was spoken by a people who, though not so eminent in arts and elegance as their eastern neighbours, were more renowned for arms, by which they extended the Roman empire over all the civilized parts of Europe, Africa and Asia. And thus the language of the Greeks, and the sword of the Romans, became the especial instruments in the hand of Providence, for disseminating the Holy Scriptures throughout the world. Their dominions, lying between the scene of scripture history and all the western provinces and islands, their language though less copious, and in every respect much inferior to the other, became the vehicle, by which, the books of Holy Scripture and the works of the Greek fathers were safely conveyed to us. In this tongue, we have the old Latin version, called the Vulgate or Italic<sup>9</sup>, whose antiquity and authority are superior to many of the Greek manuscripts, with a long list of the Latin fathers; whilst the

<sup>9</sup> See Simon's *Hist. Critic. des Vers. du Nov. Test.* in *Martianay Prolegom.*

numberless commentaries, translations, and dissertations, which have been written in different ages in Latin, are of the greatest importance to theology. Nor is it the least praise of this language, that it has become the channel, by which, we usually arrive at our knowledge of the Greek<sup>10</sup>.

## II. *The Styles of Scripture.*

From the languages, the interpreter of holy writ will bend his attention, to the styles of Scripture, which will open a field of curious and important disquisition.

When he has analyzed the nature and studied the philosophy of language, he will not require to be informed, that man is distinguished by speech above all terrestrial beings. This prerogative of man, which the Almighty hath employed in the revelation of his will, takes its origin from the impressions, which sensible and material objects make, through their respective organs upon the

<sup>10</sup> See Bishop Marsh's Lectures, part I.

mind, expressed in words or vocal signs, their arbitrary but instituted representatives. He will also know, it is by transferring these words or instituted signs, thus taken from sensible and material objects, to the thoughts and ideas of the mind, which are inapprehensible by the senses, from a similitude, real or metaphorical, between them, that language is extended to the expression of mental and abstract subjects of every kind. Such is the nature and origin of all human languages, philosophically considered ; which are nothing more, than the indirect representatives of the things which they express. He will accordingly observe, that figurative modes of speaking abound in all languages ; though, by habit, they often become unperceived in their use.

The similitude, which forms the medium of this extension to mental and abstracted subjects, is of two distinct and different kinds. Sometimes it is real and permanent. In this case, the transfer of the words, from their primitive and material, to their secondary meaning, is called *analogy*. But this similitude is often apparent only, and fluctuating, in which case, the transfer is called a

*metaphor.* When the similitude is real and permanent, the analogical term, by which it is expressed, becomes the true representative of the thought, because it distributes the features of the resemblance between the things compared. It forms the indirect, but the faithful medium, by which truth is communicated<sup>11</sup>. But, when the similitude is only apparent or imaginary, the metaphorical word, or figurative expression, is not the true representative of the thought, or necessary vehicle of information. It is of a more arbitrary, fictitious, and poetical nature, employed, not properly to convey, but to explain, to illustrate, to heighten, to adorn, and occasionally to conceal the truth. Analogy is, therefore, the instrument of the understanding, metaphor the instrument of the imagination; the one, is expressive of the practick and theoretic; the other, of the poetic mind.

However simple it may appear, this distinction of language in general, as transferred from material impressions to mental operations, forms the two general styles of Holy Scripture. It is, therefore, a distinction of the

<sup>11</sup> See vol. i. chap. iv. sect. 3.



highest importance in the study of theology. Analogy implies a real and existing correspondence, arising from the nature of the subjects themselves ; whereas figure or metaphor is an imaginary resemblance, arising merely from their surface and semblance.

If men are under the necessity of using these indirect and figurative modes of speech, to adapt human language to the mental abstraction and sublimity of their thoughts, inso-much that the frequency of the habit renders them insensible of the act ; when God, that most pure and exalted mind, totally abstracted from matter and removed from sense, communicates himself and his immortal truths to men, whose words and ideas are replete with sensible and material images ; we must see the far greater necessity of his language, being still more replete with analogical and figurative expression, however he may accommodate himself to their thoughts, their words, or ways.

### 1. *The Analogical Style.*

Analogy is the instrument of the understanding, and forms the species of logic,



which is peculiarly appropriate to subjects of theology, in every stage of that sublime and comprehensive study. It is the natural vehicle, by which, the divine truths of religion are conveyed to the view and apprehension of the human intellect, and find a place in the human heart<sup>12</sup>.

In this dark and sublunary state, wedded to sense, immured in body, involved in matter, men possess no faculties of body or soul, by which, they can form any immediate conception of beings perfectly immaterial, and more especially of God, that most pure and immaterial Spirit. Between the visible and invisible worlds, an impassable gulf is fixed, an impenetrable chasm, through which, not one single ray of celestial light can directly dart. All our information of things which are divine, must, therefore, be conveyed through an indirect channel: and, as we have seen human language capable of being transferred, by this analogy, from

<sup>12</sup> Consult Bishop Browne's *Divine Analogy*; also his *Procedure and Limits of the Human Understanding*. These are both valuable, and too little known by our modern theologians.—*Editor*.

material impressions to mental phenomena, and of communicating the latter with certainty and precision; so, by a similar, but far higher transfer from things human, material, or mental, to those which are divine, it is converted into an indirect, but faithful instrument of this celestial communication. Through the agency of this necessary instrument, we are alone rendered capable of receiving the mysteries of religion; which, in condescension to the apprehension and capacity of man, the Deity hath graciously and abundantly employed<sup>13</sup>.

Though analogy often affords strong presumptive evidence, it cannot in theology amount to certainty, till it receives scriptural

<sup>13</sup> Vates sacri, naturam divinam, sub humanis imaginibus adumbrant, eo quod illud necessario postulet humanæ mentis imbecillitas; eoque modo, ut quæ a rebus humanis ad Deum transferuntur, nunquam proprie accipi possint. Semper remittitur intellectus ab umbra ad veritatem, neque in nuda hæret imagine, sed protinus quærit et investigat id, quod in divina natura ei imagini est analogum; grandius quiddam et excelsius, quam quod possit plane concipere et apprehendere, sed quod animum, metu quodam et admiratione, percellit.—Ea enim est mentis nostræ ignorantia et cæcitas in divinæ naturæ contemplatione, ut ejus notionem simplicem et puram, nullo modo, possimus attingere.—Lowth. Præl. De S. P. Heb. xvi.

authority ; but, as the proof of every divine doctrine must depend on the Scriptures, the analogies which they sanction become argumentative, and may be pleaded, in defence of the truth, which they illustrate, as resulting from a similar relation. When the same relation subsists between two heavenly, as between two earthly things ; then, on account of this analogy, the word, which expresses the one relation may be transferred to the other. It is thus, that the figures of things below become representatives of the “ patterns of things in the heavens<sup>14</sup>.” It is thus, that the deep things of God become capable of being imparted to our finite understandings.

This divine analogy, so indispensable to divine revelation, is, like the human, founded on similitude ; consisting, in a permanent resemblance and correspondent reality, between the terrestrial things, or those ideas, which are the direct objects of human intellect, and those celestial truths, of which we can have no direct conception. It is expressed, by transferring the words and ideas,

<sup>14</sup> See Heb. ix. 23, 24.

which stand for the terrestrial things, to the celestial truths ; which words are to be understood in their plain and obvious, not figurative sense. So that the comparison is founded on something real, as well as similar ; from which real and immanent similarity, as a principle, reason deduces a just and true correspondence<sup>15</sup>.

By means of this correspondence, which forms the analogical style of Scripture, the eternal relations of the glorious Godhead are truly and faithfully conveyed to us ; the relations of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, with their office and operations, as Creator, Redeemer, Mediator, and Sanctifier. All the mysteries of our religion are, through this analogical medium, revealed to us, so far as the revealer has thought necessary, by their correspondent names and terms. They are described as a price, ransom, redemption, atonement ; we are saved, purchased, and redeemed—we are “ the children of God,” and “ the joint heirs with Christ,” and thus all our human relations are brought to bear on this divine analogy.

<sup>15</sup> See vol. i. p. 52—56.

Let us illustrate this reasoning, by one example. Christ is represented in Scripture, as an advocate and intercessor, in the strict and proper language of analogy. Whatever is proper to an advocate, pleading before a human judge, that Christ transacts before the throne of God, for us ; and what an intercessor would effect between man and man, that Christ performs between God and man. As our advocate, he pleads ; as our intercessor, he reconciles man to God.

This language of analogy, thus real and permanent in its use, which forms the continuous style of Holy Scripture, however indirect, is clearly to be understood. When God is termed the Father, in respect of Christ the Son ; what a father is to a son here, according to the law of nature, that God is to Christ, by a supernatural generation. The word mediator, in its familiar use with men, imports a person, who, by interposing his friendly offices, reconciles those who were at variance. It is substituted, by analogy, to represent Christ as interposing, in a similar way, between God and man. And though the manner of his supernatural generation, and also of his

mediatorial interposition be inconceivable by us, and perhaps ineffable ; yet the word *Son*, fully and clearly informs us of his relation to the Father ; whilst that of *Mediator*, as clearly and certainly expresses this consolatory truth—that, as one man reconciles two enemies, so men are reconciled to God the Father, by the inestimable mediation of the Son.—This is a true and real analogical statement. But when Christ is called “the head of the church,” or we are called “the members of his mystical body ;” though the relation be very illustrative of the connexion which subsists between the head and members of our human bodies, the expression is metaphorical, rather than analogic. It is founded only on ideal resemblance, and not on any actual identity or sameness of relations. It is a scriptural illustration, but not a scriptural analogy.

— Instead of giving men new and spiritual ideas of heavenly things, different to those they have by nature, or instead of using a spiritual language, or mode of communication, adapted directly to express such heavenly realities (which would be to change their na-



ture at once, and to treat them as different beings, contrary to the divine intention); this analogy takes men as they are, by only transferring their words and ideas, from earthly, to heavenly subjects. By this divine and adorable arrangement, “the invisible things of God,” in the emphatic language of St. Paul, “are clearly seen, being understood by the things which are made<sup>16</sup>.”

In human analogies, by understanding both sides of the comparison, which are equally the objects of our senses or reflection, we can judge of the exact degree and proportion of the similitude. But, in this divine analogy, as we understand only one, that is, the earthly side, we cannot judge of the exact similitude. Yet have we an equivalent, more than sufficient to compensate this defect, in the veracity of Him, whose goodness hath vouchsafed us this supernatural communication, and whose wisdom hath judged it to be sufficient. On this faith we depend, that the resemblance is certain, incapable of deceiving, though incom-

<sup>16</sup> Rom. i. 20.



prehensible in its nature. The same benign and gracious Being, who hath furnished us with senses, by which we are not deceived, hath given us this diviner mode of instruction. Since it is as necessary, and even more important than the evidence of our senses, its truth is as certain, as if we understood both sides of the similitude, or as if he had given us direct and adequate ideas of his celestial truths, by a mode of communication directly adapted to them. It presents us with clear and lively representations, and we instantly infer their correspondent realities ; relying as we may upon his truth and wisdom, and thus forming them into the foundation of our present faith and future hope.

Compared with that more direct and personal intuition of the Godhead, which we may be admitted to enjoy, in that future and more perfect stage of our existence,—“when this mortal shall put on immortality,”—this analogic view of things may pass, as St. Paul expresses it, through the medium of a glass darkly and enigmatically. But, though we behold nothing, in a glass, of the real substance of a man, we have an exact view

of his image, which implies the existence of a correspondent body—and thus, in this analogic mirror of divine truth, we may sufficiently behold “the fair image of the Lord,” and those stupendous realities of the invisible world, with which we are concerned; without having “the great mystery of godliness” unveiled, till we are changed and prepared for its enjoyment<sup>17</sup>.

By this method of divine revelation, so necessary, so real, clear, and certain, the Almighty bowed the heavens and came down in wonderful condescension, to the blindness and imperfection of human reason; speaking to us of himself, in our own ideas and words, with the utmost familiarity, “as a man speaketh with his friend<sup>18</sup>.” He has thus enabled us to think and to speak of him, as far as we are concerned, with all reverence and adoration; yet with similar ease and certainty, as we speak of each other. “In the explication of his mysteries,” says our great philosopher, “God

<sup>17</sup> See Felton’s *Vindication of the Christian Faith*, p. 201.  
—*Editor*.

<sup>18</sup> Exodus, xxxiii. 11.

vouchsafeth to descend to the weakness of our capacity, so expressing and unfolding them to us, as they may be best comprehended by us, inoculating, as it were, his revelations upon the conceptions and notions of our reason ; and so applying his inspirations to open our understanding, as the figure of a key is fitted to the wards of a lock. We ought not, however, on this account, to be wanting to ourselves ; for, seeing God makes use of the faculty and functions of reason in his divine illuminations, we ought every way to improve the same, in order that we may be more capable to receive and entertain such holy mysteries<sup>19</sup>.”

The interpreter of the Bible will pay particular attention to the analogic style, viewing it as the wonderful arrangement, to which we owe that enlargement and extension of the human mind, without which, the stupendous truths of revelation would for ever remain at a distance from our utmost apprehension, and as inconceivable by us, as if they had no existence ; and without which,

<sup>19</sup> Bacon. De Augm. Scient. lib. ix. cap. 1.

the Deity himself would be very erroneously and obscurely known. He will acknowledge its just interpretation to be of the last importance, in forming a right conception of the Christian mysteries, or in preventing their misconception. He will allow its importance, in prescribing just limits to the human understanding and for determining the proper office of reason, in the interpretation of the Holy Scriptures. He will look up, with devout admiration, to that divine method of communication, by which the Almighty hath bowed his divinity to the earth, to raise the human mind to heaven. He has thus introduced us to an acquaintance with those objects, of which we are incapable of an immediate apprehension, till this earthly tabernacle being dissolved, we shall be admitted, “behind the veil,” to “behold them face to face.” When that great change, which we are led by this analogical intercourse to expect, shall arrive, we shall be advanced to higher capacities of knowledge and enjoyment, to the more immediate vision and fruition of the Deity. Yet even in our nearest approaches, we shall remain for ever unequal to the

immeasurable power and wisdom of the glory of God<sup>21</sup>. “And we all, with open

<sup>21</sup> See Lord Bacon’s Confession of Faith.

“Even the highest order of angels, cherubim or seraphim, must probably have a method of forming conceptions of God and his perfections, which do not come up to direct and immediate perception, such as they have of one another and of all heavenly objects, and such as we now have of things human and material. Their manner of conceiving the divine perfections, and of communing about them with one another, may be probably through the lively transcript of them in their own nature, from their great archetype and creator. Thus they think and discourse about them, with one another, if I may so speak, as we do; but, from those inconceivably more elevated and exact representations, which they find in themselves. This is but a kind of analogy; though such, as hath a much nearer foundation or proportion of similitude, than ours. And though it is a strain of divine knowledge in them, vastly transcending the farthest reach of all our capacities, and may for ever successively receive a gradual increase and improvement; yet probably it will never come up to a direct and immediate intuition of the divine nature, as it is in itself.”—Bp. Browne’s *Div. Analogy*, p. 40.\*

St. Paul says (2 Cor. xii. 4), that when he was “caught up into paradise, he heard unspeakable words, which it is not possible for a man to utter.” And if they were uttered as spoken in heaven, it would be impossible for men to understand them: for, if those were words which could express the nature of God properly and directly, or as he is understood by the angels in heaven, they would be unintel-

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\* The whole doctrine of analogy, as stated by Dr. Tatham, is taken from the *Divine Analogy* of Bishop Browne, whose language, as well as thoughts, form the staple of this entire section.—*Editor*.

face, beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, shall be changed into the same image, from glory to glory, by the Spirit of the Lord<sup>22</sup>."

## 2. *The Parabolical Style.*

Metaphor is the instrument of the imagination, that inventive faculty, to which we have assigned the province of poetry<sup>23</sup>.

In the analysis of the poetic art, the species of which words are the materials, though less exact and perfect in its imitations, than the rest, was found to exceed them greatly in extent and operation<sup>24</sup>. But, however effective and superior poetical expressions may be, as all language is incapable of imitation which is direct and immediate<sup>25</sup>, the similitude which they depict, and in which

ligible to us, unless our present nature was changed ; because we have not faculties adapted to them. To a man born blind the word "seeing" is, we know, totally unintelligible, and no human art can make him understand it. In like manner, this heavenly language would be as unintelligible to us, as the word "seeing" is to him.—See Bishop Browne's *Analogy*, p. 32.

<sup>22</sup> 2 Cor. iii. 18.

<sup>23</sup> See vol. i. p. 273.

<sup>24</sup> See vol. i. p. 285.

<sup>25</sup> See vol. i. p. 292.



consists their poetic beauty, is, in every view, very different from that, which is analogical, and is applicable to a very different purpose. This metaphorical similitude, as we have observed, does not arise from the inherent properties of the subject, by which the words are taken, and transferred to others; but from the imagination only of him, who takes and transfers them. It is, therefore, only the fictitious resemblance and arbitrary invention of the poet, for the creation of imaginative *effect*.

From the variety of these effects, (which are the ends of poetry,) it is divided into four general kinds, according to the different modes employed—descriptive, narrative, dramatical, and parabolical. Of these, the last, though the least direct and close in its imitations, has been pre-eminently distinguished, as more particularly consecrated to the service of religion. “Parabolical poetry,” according to an observation of Lord Bacon, “excels among the rest, and appears to be peculiarly sacred and venerable; since religion herself makes use of its



assistance, by which, she maintains an intercourse between divine and human things<sup>27</sup>."

As words were originally employed, like vocal symbols, to convey a meaning, in the immediate act of speaking; so, to convey speech to a distance, or record it, pictures were employed in the act of writing. Again, as words, to convey mental operations and abstract ideas, were converted into metaphors; these figures, for correspondent purposes, were gradually converted into visible symbols, or standing signs, expressive of mental emotions or poetical ideas. This was accomplished, first, by marking down their natural shape, as the figure of a horn, for strength; and then, by using the word answering to the symbol, whether in speaking or writing, to stand for the general idea. Thus, by the addition of symbolical, to metaphorical expressions in all their variety, figurative language was increased to a vast

<sup>27</sup> De Augm. Scient. lib. ii. cap. 13.

extent<sup>28</sup>. Such is the origin and nature of the parabolic style, which, by the various inventions of the imagination, in tracing poetical similitudes of different kinds, and applying them to different purposes, was diversified and extended into all the forms of parable, allusion, allegory, comparison or similitude, apologue, imagery, symbol, personification, and representative action<sup>29</sup>.

This style, which originated in necessity, was gradually converted to use and ornament. Under its dark and enigmatical veil, the knowledge of the earliest ages was propagated, or its wisdom concealed. The priest inculcated his doctrines, through the medium

<sup>28</sup> De genere figurato jam dicturus, video mihi pœne infinitam rerum materiam, et immensum quendam campum patere.—Lowth. Heb. Præl. v.

<sup>29</sup> Per dictionem figuratam, eam intelligo, qua, una pluresque voces vel imagines, in aliarum locum, transferuntur, aut etiam aliis illustrandis inserviunt, ex aliqua, quam cum iis habent, similitudine. Ea similitudo, si innuit tantum, fit metaphora; si oratione continuata, dicitur allegoria: si aperte exprimitur, collatis inter se utrisque imaginibus, fit comparatio: fundatur etiam in ejusmodi similitudine prosopopœia, cum, vel rebus fictis aut sensu carentibus, datur actus et persona—vel cum veræ personæ probabilis oratio tribuitur.—Lowth. Heb. Præl. v. See also Bishop Marsh's 16th, 17th, and 18th Lectures.

of mysterious rites ; under the cover of allegory, the philosopher disclosed his science ; the legislator and the moralist conveyed their instructions, by proverbs and parables ; and, by a well-invented and consistent fiction, in which, every species of poetical expression and imagery was interwoven, the poet delighted and improved mankind.

Agreeably to this method of instruction, which prevailed amongst the eastern nations in ancient times, the dispensation of religion was conducted. Various is the texture and composition of the poetic or parabolic style, employed by the sacred writers in almost every part of the Holy Scriptures, (excepting that which is historical,) to answer the various ends of the Inspirer. These ends may be divided into two general kinds ; the one, common to them with all other poets, to illustrate, adorn, and exalt the subject<sup>30</sup>. The other, proper and peculiar to themselves, to couch and conceal their

<sup>30</sup> Etenim dictionis figuratæ,—id consilium est, ea vis, ut imaginibus aliunde translatis, res vel evidentius ac clarius, vel grandis etiam atque elatius exprimantur.—Lowth. Heb. Præl. v.

meaning, in a way, at once singular and essential to the religious dispensation, of which it was the instrument. These different purposes are frequently mixed and involved in the same scriptural passage or expression. They should, however, be distinguished as far as possible, by all critics and interpreters of holy writ, and should be held by the latter in constant and awful recollection.

We possess an excellent critique on the Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews, from the pen of a late learned and ingenious prelate, which was delivered in lectures, from a professorial chair in this university. The work is bold and magnanimous in its design, tempered with that circumspect caution, suggested by a subject so awful and sublime. In the execution, it is difficult to determine, whether the refinement of critical judgment, or the elegance of classical language chiefly predominates. It was not the object of the polished author of this admirable performance, to establish the principles of scriptural interpretation, for the use of the theologist; but to recommend the beautiful poems of the Hebrews, to the poetical taste and classical

genius of his academical auditors, and thus to invite them to the study of the Holy Scriptures<sup>31</sup>. Whilst we see, therefore, the first of the above-mentioned ends of the poetic style, displayed in this celebrated work, with all the acumen of criticism and minuteness of discrimination; we find the second, which is the more peculiar and important, almost entirely overlooked. In consequence of this inattention to the appropriate end of scripture style, we have to lament, that, with the purest and most liberal intention, this learned author has inadvertently seduced himself and others into a style of criticism, injurious to the right interpretation of the Holy Scriptures. By this method of criticism, the sacred volume has been brought in all respects too much on a level with human compositions, whilst its structure, as well as meaning, are too much judged of and decided by a classical standard.

In this opinion, I think, we are supported

<sup>31</sup> Ut meminerim me, non theologiæ studiosis divinæ veritatis oracula exponere, sed juventuti in politiori doctrina et literarum elegantis exercitatæ commendare lectissima poemata.—Præl. ii.

both by the general design and execution of this celebrated work.

It is distributed into three parts.—The first treats of the metre of the Hebrew poetry; and to the remark which, whether true and just or not, is at least ingenious and plausible,—that some kind of metre is essential to poetry,—I have only to rejoin, that, by bringing to the poetry of the Hebrews, the notions of metre from the Grecian, Roman, and other poetry of more modern date, which may uniformly be in measured verse, he too hastily inferred, that the poetry and the metre of the ancient Scriptures were co-extensive with his own vague conception of metre. By this decision, he excludes all those parts, which are not thus metrical, from the poetic province; abridging thereby the privileges and extent of the parabolical, which is, also, the prophetic style<sup>32</sup>. In consequence of this confined conception of the Hebrew poetry, he excludes the whole book of Daniel, from being poetical and parabolical, and consequently, from being pro-

<sup>32</sup> See his preliminary dissertation to Isaiah.



phetical. Without its appropriate poetical vehicle, prophecy cannot exist.

The second part is on the style of the Hebrew poetry, in which, after a dissertation on what is called the sententious, he proceeds to the figurative, which peculiarly constitutes the parabolical style. He gives a formal specification of the different ends it has in view,—to explain and illustrate, to aggrandize or exalt the subject. But it is remarkable, that he has altogether omitted the peculiar and appropriate end of the figurative style, to *conceal* the meaning<sup>33</sup>. In this part, he has given a display of the figures of rhetorical diction—of the metaphor, in all its variety of poetic imagery, of the allegory and parable. In the eleventh lecture, he treats of the mystic allegory, with great ability; in which, he certainly adverts briefly to the second, or specific, end of the parabolical style, as adapted to the object of prophetic concealment. But this notice is merely partial and incidental, and confined to one

<sup>33</sup> See Præl. v.



single figure. He then proceeds to the different kinds of comparison, *prosopopœia*, or personification, and employs four lectures on sublimity of diction, in raising the conceptions and affections.

In the third part, he gives a minute and critical analysis of the various species of Hebrew or prophetic poetry, as it assimilates and accords with the various kinds of classical composition; the elegy, the ode, the hymn, the didactic, and dramatic poem; excluding, from the poetical calendar, the entire books of Daniel and Jonah<sup>34</sup>.

The whole of this celebrated performance is therefore a critique of sacred poetry, by the standard of profane. It is to judge of divine, by human compositions. And this work is entitled to the praise, which has been bestowed on it, so far as this kind of criticism may be fairly and justly employed upon a book of most solemn and superior import; which is professedly concealed in its expressions and mysterious in many parts; with the view of displaying those poetical ends, which

<sup>34</sup> Præl. xx.

it may possess, in common with other poetical fictions.—But is this all? Had the Author of inspiration no other end in view, when he dictated the prophecies? And if there be another and higher end, where can we draw the line between them?—It deserves to be well and maturely weighed, how far the sacred critic may venture in displaying these classical ends, or in judging of the poetical means employed, without intruding on the rights, and infringing the privileges, of that higher end, which is properly divine, and peculiarly adapted to the purpose of Holy Scripture. The pious and ingenious author of the *Prelections* seems, indeed, to be occasionally arrested, in the midst of his critical career, by this awful reflection; as if he were sensible, that he might be sometimes treading, with a profane step, upon holy ground.

Without paying sufficient attention, as a divine, to that vast system of prophecy interwoven, by means of the parabolic style, in all its variety and extent, through the whole of the Hebrew Scriptures, he has indulged the critic with great freedom, and indeed with much ability: and it need not offend his

numerous admirers (of whom, I profess myself to be one), if I say, that this celebrated work betrays more of the classic, than the divine. After the example of Longinus, and with the acumen of Aristotle, it was his object to display the various and distinctive characters of the sacred poets, in the sententious, the figurative, and the sublime; to illustrate their specific qualities, and to trace the peculiar effects, which they are calculated to produce on the imagination and affections. With such intention, the Professor of poetry selected a field of criticism for the theme of his lectures, as fruitful as it was novel; in which his classical genius has expatiated with equal taste and judgment. But he has overlooked the main end and object, which the Inspirer of this poetry had principally in view, and which should place a restraint on our judgment, in deciding upon the former. He has also confined the parabolical style, within limits which are hypothetical, and far too contracted; for, independently of the metre and other accidental modifications, all scripture language which is indirect, whether couched in parables, visions,

dreams, or representative actions, is parabolic, and capable of concealing a prophetic import. He acknowledges the intimate connexion between prophecy and poetry in the Hebrew Scriptures, and considers them, as the joint dictate of the Holy Spirit<sup>35</sup>. Yet it is difficult to conjecture, why he has dwelt so partially and incidentally on this prophetic end of poetry, but on the supposition, that by allowing its full weight in the writings of inspiration, he would have blunted the edge of that inventive conjecture and critical refinement, in which his genius so much delighted, and in which he has so liberally indulged.

Considering the Holy Scriptures as different from all other books, in their origin, intention, and execution, the theological student should check the career of this classical and sentimental criticism, however elegant

<sup>35</sup> Ex quibus omnibus satis liquet, veterum Hebræorum sententia, cum poetica, prophetiam arcta quadam societate et cognatione conjunctam fuisse. Utriusque facultatis idem erat nomen ; eadem quippe origo, idem auctor, Spiritus Sanctus, &c.—Præl. xviii.

and ingenious, to concentrate his chief attention on the mysterious and appropriate end of the parabolic style. He should awfully bear in mind, that a vast and various chain of prophecy was employed by the omniscient Dictator of religion, as its concomitant and standing evidence. For the conveyance of this evidence from age to age, to the most distant periods of futurity, he should observe the amazing texture of the most profound concealment, interwoven in every part of the religious dispensation, from its earliest annunciation down to its final close, when the Spirit of Prophecy withdrew his special communications. This texture he will discover to be wrought together, with the most exquisite and consummate art, calculated to fulfil the secret, but important end of the Inspirer. He will observe, that the poetic or parabolic diction, in its full latitude and extent, was the divine instrument, under which, the Holy Spirit concealed his prophetic designs. Without losing its beautiful and sublime effect on his fancy and affections, he will perceive, that this was the main, and indeed the only adequate purpose ; and hence,

is so much more abundantly employed in the Holy Scriptures, than in any other book. He will think, that fanciful and sentimental criticism, even were it employed with the utmost safety, and without the least presumption, is a very trifling and inferior office, when contrasted with that of the sacred interpreter, engaged in a serious investigation of the curious structure of this style, which, however varied, is uniform and consistent, comparing one part with another, in order to develop the secret intention of the Spirit of Prophecy, as it comes to be evolved in the prophetical event<sup>36</sup>.

He will acknowledge two different causes of this parabolical concealment, the one special, the other general. The prophecies of the Old Testament were delivered, under a temporary and inferior dispensation, preparatory to the establishment of that which was to be perpetual and perfect. They were, therefore, eclipsed and shadowed, that the temporary economy might not be degraded in the minds of those, who were to live and

<sup>36</sup> See Bishop Marsh's 19th to 22nd Lectures.



to serve God under it, by holding up a view too conspicuous, of the brighter glory which was to follow. "The ministration which was made glorious, had no glory in this respect; by reason of that glory which excelleth<sup>37</sup>." For the express purpose of hiding from their view the abolition of the law, and of preventing them from being lost to its observance, in the too earnest anticipation of the gospel, "Moses put a veil over his face, that they could not steadfastly look to the end of that, which was to be abolished<sup>38</sup>." And, to this special cause of concealment, he may add another, which is more general and permanent. The completion of prophecy, being left to the instrumentality of free agents, if the predictions were not thus concealed, such a restraint would be placed on the human will in their fulfilment, as to destroy the nature of man; or human obstinacy might be tempted to counteract the intent of Providence, and thereby to destroy the purpose of God. But, under the cover of this parabolical veil, the free agency

<sup>37</sup> 2 Cor. iii. 10.

<sup>38</sup> 2 Cor. iii. 13.



of man is made compatible with prophecy, whilst the Almighty is converting the actions, the errors, and the vices of men, into the secret instruments of his design. On that greatest of prophetic events, the crucifixion of his Son, the ancient prophets are so full and clear, that it is difficult to conceive, how the persons, by whom it was executed, could be ignorant of what they did. Yet, that they were ignorant, we know from his own authority—"Father, forgive them; they know nor what they do"<sup>39</sup>:" and St. Peter told them afterward, "That through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers; but the things which God had before shewed, by the mouth of his prophets,—that Christ should suffer,—he hath so fulfilled"<sup>40</sup>."

The same parabolical diction was subsequently employed by Christ and his apostles, in their prophetic character, as teachers sent from God, for the purpose of shading under its veil the mystical doctrines, exalted pre-

<sup>39</sup> Luke, xxiii. 34.

<sup>40</sup> Acts, iii. 17, 18. See Bishop Hurd's Introduction to the Prophecies; Bishop Sherlock's Discourses on the Use and Intent of Prophecy; and Davison on Prophecy.

cepts, and prophetical anticipations of the New dispensation.

The parabolical style of Holy Scripture, in the different forms which it assumes, is that important and extensive theme, which solicits the express study of the theologian, and which, independently of the important end of his profession, promises to reward his labour, by gratifying a sublime and laudable research. In every stage of the investigation, he will be filled with solemn admiration, whilst he traces the consummate art, and contemplates the marvellous address of the Inspirer, in concealing the prophetic meaning, under such general descriptions, different senses, symbols, allegories, images, representations, dreams, and visions, as were mysterious in the highest degree, till the anticipated event arrived ; yet plain and obvious, when that event took place.

Poetry from its nature consists of general ideas<sup>41</sup>. By the use of these abstractions, prophetical enunciations exhibit only the outlines of things, as of pictures which are sketched ; yet with such an exquisite pencil, that no

<sup>41</sup> See vol. i. p. 283.

facts, but the events themselves, are able to fill up and to adjust the particular features, or to give a finish and perfection to the celestial portrait. The general outline is indeed clearly and distinctly marked by the prophet; but, to give it all its personal and distinctive traits, is left to the unerring hand of time. Whatever is predicted in such general terms, however clearly expressed, must remain in impenetrable secrecy, till the prophetic event arrive, with its adjuncts, circumstances, and exact occurrences, to disclose it <sup>42</sup>.—"And the Lord answered and said, Write the vision and make it plain upon tables, that he may run who readeth it. For the vision is yet for an appointed time, and at the end it shall speak, and not lie—though it tarry, wait thou for it, because it will surely come, it will not tarry <sup>43</sup>."

<sup>42</sup> Quod si—prophetiæ ipsius indoles, in extremis tantum rerum lineamentis effingendis, et in generalibus affectionibus describendis amplificandisque, præcipue versetur; exinde satis intelligi potest, primo, quanto cum suo emolumento poesi adjutrice et administra utatur, quamque ad omnes suas rationes accommodatam habeat dictionem parabolicam; cujus ea natura est, ut magnam præbeat copiam et varietatem communium imaginum, quibus aliqua materies late ampleque in universum exornari possit.—Lowth, Præl. xx.

<sup>43</sup> Habakkuk, ii. 2, 3.

The double sense of prophecy, implying the accomplishment of the prediction in more events than one, in the same system of religious dispensation, but at different periods and parts of it, forms doubtless a prophetic arrangement of great and general application. "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy"<sup>44</sup>;—the end and object of the prophetic dispensation. A temporary economy was introduced, preparatory to the introduction of his gospel, affording a convenient vehicle of the prophetic enunciations, by which, they were at once safely conveyed, and sufficiently concealed. One sense was brought to advert to the immediate objects and concerns of the temporal, though theocratic polity; whilst the other was preluding to Christ, to the nature, offices, and establishment of his spiritual kingdom. The same expressions, which, in their first and more literal signification, described the fate and fortunes of the Jewish state, which was the type; portended, in their second and figurative sense, the character and success of the Christian church, as the antitype. Future and

<sup>44</sup> Rev. xix. 10.

more illustrious events were signified, in successive and less important transactions. Under the predictions of civil states, were couched the spiritual. These different objects were accomplished by the help of a figurative and poetic language, capable of enlarging or contracting itself, as times and circumstances respectively demanded.

This method of prophetical concealment, the elegant author of the *Prelections* has treated with great perspicuity of language, and exactness of discrimination ; though, perhaps, on too confined a scale. With judicious caution and ingenuous diffidence, he acknowledges the great difficulty and danger of judging and criticising a subject so professedly involved in mystery<sup>45</sup>. Yet the mystic allegory is, by no means, the only species of parabolical diction, employed by the Spirit of Prophecy, to conceal its predictive enunciations. Various are the images and visions in-

<sup>45</sup> Verum allegoriæ mysticæ leges ullas hæc in parte constituere et perquam difficile, et fortasse etiam temerarium, &c.—Præl. xi.

Verum de hoc genere non est fas sperare, quin in nonnullis magna subsit obscuritas, quæ non solum ipsam rei naturam consequitur, sed suam habet utilitatem, &c.—Ibid.

directly used, and often, where the predictions are not shadowed under these, but delivered in a plain narration of facts, as in the prophecy of Jonah ; or in oratorical style, like many predictions of Ezekiel ; or with mixture of both, like the whole of Daniel,—the language is still indirect and poetical, in its general character. Where the expression is more direct<sup>46</sup>, the same obscurity is accomplished, by giving it an ambiguous and enigmatic cast.

Thus various and complex is the mode employed by the Spirit of Prophecy in the Holy Scriptures, to conceal from the most distant apprehensions of the human mind, the full import of its predictions, till they come to be unfolded by the event. This veil should place a just restraint on criticism, in judging and deciding on the words of this mysterious volume.

In one part of his work, the author of the *Prelections* acknowledges the free and singular genius of sacred poetry, which is possessed of a boldness and eccentricity repugnant to all

<sup>46</sup> See Ezekiel, xii. 13, and Jeremiah, xxxiv. 3.



artificial rules<sup>47</sup>; but elsewhere he has assigned this important reason, that it resulted from the impulse of the Divine Inspirer<sup>48</sup>. If, to these just observations, he had added the authority of St. Peter, that “prophecy came not by the will of man; but holy men of old spake, as they were moved, by the Spirit of God<sup>49</sup> :” such considerations might have induced him to attribute more to the divine agency, in moulding the language of the prophets to its celestial purpose. Such reflections would have smothered in the birth that spirit of criticism, of which he was the father; and which, in the hands of others more adventurous, and less judicious than himself, hath dishonoured, I had almost said disgraced, the volume of inspiration<sup>50</sup>.

<sup>47</sup> Per omnia in verbis sensibusque sua quædam vis atque audacia, nullis mancipata legibus, liberum Hebreæ poeseos genium unice spirans.—Præl. x.

<sup>48</sup> Quod ad rerum ordinem ac dispositionem attinet, formamque legitimam, quæ in hac specie integrum poema conficiat; nihil sane statui potest, quod in universum videatur obtinere. Soluta plerumque, ut, par est, et libera, suo impetu fertur, nullas servans leges, sed materiæ rationem sequens, et Divini Spiritus impulsus.—Præl. xx.

<sup>49</sup> 2 Pet. i. 21.

<sup>50</sup> This very learned and ingenious prelate, to whom the Holy Scriptures are much indebted for delivering them from



Instead of indulging his genius, in a vain and visionary criticism, founded on classical

the rabbinical prejudices, by which, they had been for ages entangled and obscured, who, with a great share of biblical learning, united a correct and classical taste, endeavoured in his Prelections to open the sacred volume to the more general study of our academical youth, by giving them a taste of their superior beauties, in a critique similar to those which had been so successfully written on the heathen poets. “*Enimvero quid est, cur Homeri, Pindari, Horatii scriptis celebrandis omnique laude cumulandis toties immoramur, Mosem interea, Davidem, Isaiam, silentio præterimus?—An id tandem statuendum est, eorum quidem hominum scripta, qui tantum modo effecerunt, quantum ingenio et facultate consequi potuerunt, ratione et via tractari oportere, et ad artis præscriptum et normam exigi: quæ vero altiore habent originem, et Divini Spiritus afflatui vere tribuuntur, eorum vim etiam et venustatem suo lumine quodammodo elucere; sed nec doctrinæ institutis constare, nec artis finibus circumscribi posse?—Quamvis igitur ad occultos hujusce Nili cœlestis fontes haud fas sit penetrare, licebit tamen sancti fluminis cursum et flexiones sequi, aquarum auctus et recessus notare, ac rivos etiam quosdam tanquam in subjacentes campos deducere.*”—[Præl. ii.] The design is plausible, and that plausibility considerably increased by the flowers of diction. But the only plan upon which it can be executed, is upon the supposition, that though the Spirit of prophecy supplied the matter, the manner and the language were left to the natural genius of the inspired. “*Alterum impetum mentis vocat Longinus τὸ περὶ τὰς νοήσεις ἀδρεπήζον; alterum τὸ σφοδρὸν καὶ ἐνθουσιαστικὸν πάθος, appellat. Utrumque ita in hoc argumento usurpamus, atque ita sacris vatis tribuimus, ut nihil derogemus Divini Spiritus afflatui: etsi suam interea vim propriæ cujusque scriptoris naturæ atque ingenio concedamus. Neque enim instinctu divino ita comitatur vatis animus, ut protinus obruatui hominis*

and sentimental taste, the sober theologist will find himself more useful employment, in

*indoles: attolluntur et eriguntur, non extinguuntur aut occultantur naturalis ingenii facultates; et quanquam Mosis, Davidis, et Isaiaë scripta semper spirent quiddam tam excelsum tamque cœleste, ut plane videantur divinitus edita, nihilo tamen minus in iis Mosem, Davidem, et Isaiam semper agnoscimus.*”—[Præl. xvi.] But, even if we admit the supposition in part, the important question occurs, How far is it to go? What human critic shall determine, that the Holy Spirit had no influence at all, upon the manner or the language of the prophet, in which his enunciations were delivered? Or what human critic shall say precisely, how far his afflatus was concerned? What human critic draw the line between the Inspirer and the man? The different and characteristic styles of Moses, David, and Isaiah, will go a very little way, if any at all, to this important decision: for, when the Spirit employs human instruments, he takes them, as they are, and by the act of employing them, makes them his own; so that, whether Amos spoke as a shepherd, or David as a king, they uttered the words of God.

These difficulties beset this ingenious critic, and not all his management and address were able to surmount them. At a time, when biblical learning was making such laudable progress under his auspices, it is much to be deplored, that he essayed this critical refinement upon the sacred Scriptures. Though that discreet and cautious judgment, by which he was distinguished, restrained his pen within moderate bounds, the high reputation which the novelty and plausibility of the undertaking conferred on the work, the distinguished eminence of the author, and the fascinating elegance of his language, produced their effect on the minds of others, in stimulating them to an imitation of his method, that they might participate some of his fame. These possessing less of that ingenuity and high classical taste, in which the chief value of the work consists, could only distinguish

developing the various methods of concealment, furnished by the parabolical style, from

themselves by an outrage of its faults. Mounted upon this critical Pegasus, an eminent professor, in an university renowned of late for biblical learning, proceeds,—“And, if the poet Ezekiel has here and there overloaded his subject with ornaments, we shall be unable to refuse our admiration to his genius, notwithstanding these defects.—It almost seems, that the poet himself felt the hurtful consequences of his ample representations; under this, he endeavoured to prevent them; first, by giving a general sketch, and then every thing more determinate and in detail. But I doubt whether he has thus prevented them. This method is rather productive of another hurtful consequence;—he occasionally seems to correct himself, but really does not; that he occasionally seems to retract something, which, when accurately considered, is not the fact. The author of the Revelation, whose poetry is in the same style with that of Ezekiel, and full of imagination, for the most part, has avoided the rocks on which his predecessor stranded; and for the most part, has happily cut off the wild shoots of a heated imagination. He also has fictions and giant-forms: but he has produced them, only so far as to give the reader the full image before his eyes; he does not pursue them minutely,—and he does not distract or pain his reader. But, as Ezekiel describes, designs, paints, and exhausts all minutiae, he sometimes injures his poems. According to my taste, he should have broken off after he had given the chariot-throne, restless wheels, and cherubim full of living motions; but, as he continues to describe the motion of the throne by his wonderful forms, he makes unpleasing impressions. Even where these consequences do not arise, from the prolix details of the prophet, he is misled by them to other faults which are equally striking. They sometimes carry him to things which are unnatural. Thus he has acted against nature in slaying what is not food. How much superior is Isaiah in a similar representation! And should not the great profusion of

principles contained in scripture ; in analyzing and arranging the different kinds of

learning in the elegy and funeral lamentation over Tyre, when she was destroyed, be quite removed from this piece? On the contrary, it was a happy invention that his lofty poems are sometimes interrupted by short speeches. They are not only useful for the illustration of his symbols, but also for the repose of the mind. By this change, his readers are agreeably entertained ; and their imagination finds resting places, so as to soar more easily after the imagination of the poet. Ezekiel, therefore, remains a great poet, full of originality notwithstanding his faults ; and, in my opinion, whoever censures him as if he were only an imitator of the old prophets, can never feel his power.”—Eickhorn’s *Introd.* to his *Old Testament*. See Newcome’s *Introduction to Ezekiel*, pp. 24—26.

Had this learned professor indulged his critical cavallo, in trampling so unmercifully upon the works of the great poet, who feigned the ten years’ siege of Troy, as freely as upon those of the prophet, who announced the destruction of the temple of Jerusalem,—who “ saw the vision of God,” [*Ezekiel*, chap. i.] and spoke the “ words of Jehovah,”—he would have been most deservedly torn to pieces by a whole host of critics.—The impetus of this critic, though neither the *τὸ ἀδρεπήβολον*, nor the *τὸ ἐνθουσιαστικὸν*, is surely the *τὸ μανιακὸν πάθος*.

Without thus indulging his critical abilities, the judicious Addison was only a distant and humble admirer.—“ As the Jewish nation produced men of great genius, without considering them as inspired writers, they have transmitted to us many hymns and divine odes, which excel those that are delivered down to us by the Greeks and Romans, in the poetry, as much as in the subject to which it was consecrated.”—*Spectator*, No. 453.

But, perhaps, the general idea of Scripture poetry, as given by a French writer, is still more just, because it does not separate the poetry from the inspiration. “ It is the true

prophecy, and unravelling “the great mystery of godliness,” by assorting predictions with events, and types with their anti-types<sup>52</sup>.

language of poetry, of prophecy, and of revelation : a celestial fire animates and transports it. What ardour in its odes ! What sublime images in the visions of Isaiah ! How pathetic and affecting are the tears of Jeremiah ! One there finds beauties and models of every kind. Nothing is more capable than this language of elevating a poetic spirit ; and we do not fear to assert that the Bible, superior to Homer and Virgil in many places, can inspire still more than they that rare and singular genius which is the portion of those who dedicate themselves to poetry.” And this learned Frenchman might have added the reason of this superiority, by attributing it to its true cause, the Inspirer himself.

The authority of our great philosopher is decided on the question. “*Alter autem interpretandi modus, quem pro excessu statuimus, videtur primo intuitu sobrius et castus, sed tamen et scripturas ipsas dedecorat, et plurimo ecclesiam detrimento officit. Is est, ut verbo dicam, quando scripturæ divinitus inspiratæ eodem quo humana scripta explicantur modo.*”—Bacon. *De Augm. Scient. lib. ix.* See also his *Advancement of Learning*, book ii. at the conclusion.

<sup>52</sup> Tale esse debet hujus operis institutum, ut cum singulis ex scripturis prophetiis eventuum veritas jungatur, idque per omnes mundi ætates, tum ad confirmationem fidei, tum ad instituendam disciplinam quandam et peritiam in interpretatione prophetiarum, quæ adhuc restant complendæ, &c. —Bacon. *De Augm. Scient. lib. ii. cap. 11.*

On this subject, the student will find much advantage in consulting Conybeare’s *Bampton Lectures*, on the secondary and spiritual interpretation of Scripture ; also Bishop Marsh’s *Lectures*, part iv. ; and Jones on the *Figurative Language of Scripture*.—*Editor.*



Much of the obscurity, in which, the prophetic writings were involved at their first delivery, is now dispelled, and a new field of investigation is opened to the theologist<sup>53</sup>. Although the prophetic system, that vast and various apparatus, arranged by the invisible hand of Him, “with whom one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day,” for the testimony of his Son, will not be entirely evolved, till the present material system be destroyed; time, by interpreting many predictions in their correspondent events, hath supplied such grounds of analogical reasoning, as may lead us into the

<sup>53</sup> *Equidem in vaticiniis contra fit ac in cæteris omnibus sacræ poeseos partibus; illa tum sunt maxime obscura, cum primum sunt edita; quæque aliis tenebras inducit, illis infert lucem, vetustas. Adeoque ista obscuritas, quæ in hoc genere ab initio insederat, aliqua ex parte jam tollitur: multa sunt, quæ explicavit ipse rei eventus, certissimus oraculorum interpres: multa, quibus Divinus ille Spiritus, ea quæ primum induxerat, involucria dignatus est detrahare; plerisque aliquam lucem intulit ejusdem sacratissimis institutionibus clarius illustrata religionum Judaicarum ratio. Ita fit, ut quæ pars sacræ poeseos et singularem quandam naturam et maximam in se difficultatem habet, ad eam tamen cognoscendam et perspiciendam meliore jam conditione accedamus, iis subsidiis et adminiculis instructi, quibus plane veteres Hebræi, quæque ne ipsis quidem vatibus Dei inter-nunciis concessa sunt.—Lowth. Præl. xi.*

structure and economy of prophetic language, and prepare us to acknowledge the accomplishment of others, when their events arrive. Though intentionally mysterious, the parabolical style is uniform and consistent, and of course reducible to rule ; one part supplying the key to another. It was the usual mode of writing at the time the prophecies were delivered, and is constructed on such general principles, as make it a theme of rational investigation. Another key is, therefore, to be found by a learned and diligent search into the archives of ancient and oriental learning ; in the images of the eastern and western poets ; in the subsisting monuments of Egyptian hieroglyphics, from which all eastern writings took its symbolic cast ; in those pagan ceremonies and superstitions, which drew their origin from the Jewish ; and, above all, in the Holy Scriptures themselves, which, although the productions of many different pens, employ the same symbols, images, and other figures, which were intended by their one omniscient Dictator to be interpreters of each other.

By an extensive comparison of words,



phrases, and figures, respectively with each other, the judicious interpreter may hope to develop the prophetic meaning, which is designedly and curiously concealed by the Divine Spirit, as one amongst other reasons, that it might afford a virtuous and sublime employment to the human mind. And if the learned, instead of wasting their labour in the fabrication of hypothetical system, their learning in disputation, and their ingenuity in critical refinement, by an extensive induction and judicious arrangement of particulars, collected out of the Bible and other monuments of antiquity, would supply the theological student with some general rules or principles of interpretation (which is a great desideratum in theology), they would bring an offering, as acceptable to the student in theology, as it would be useful to the cause of scriptural information<sup>54</sup>.

Whilst other proofs of our religion are

<sup>54</sup> Something of this kind has been done by the learned Daubuz, in the Preliminary Discourse and Symbolical Dictionary, introductory to his Commentary on the Revelations. In 1730, Mr. Lancaster abridged and new-modelled this learned work in a quarto volume, dedicated to Dr. Potter,

perhaps somewhat weakened and obscured by time, the evidence of prophecy, which challenges the peculiar cultivation of the student, is gathering strength and clearness, and gratifying him with an immediate and personal conviction. In this important department of theological study, as his application will be made at the same time to history, whilst he is strengthened in the evidence of divine revelation, he will derive a sublime and endearing enjoyment, from contemplating the ways of men and the wonders of Providence.

Thus we see the province of imagination, that exalted faculty of the human mind, by which its finest affections are sublimed and qualified for the imitation of the goodness, the adoration of the wisdom, and the admiration of the power of God, extensively employed in the act of discovering his will

then Bishop of Oxford, hoping that, under the patronage of so great a name, this valuable work would have met with a general reception. It has, however, shared the fate of many of the best of books, to be known by very few, whilst many of the worst are in the libraries and hands of all.

to men; forming that indirect and poetical vehicle, through which the truths and evidences of our religion are conveyed.—“In matters of faith and religion,” says Lord Bacon, “the imagination is elevated above the reason. Not that divine illumination resideth in the imagination (nay, rather in the highest tower of the mind and understanding); but as in moral virtues, divine grace uses the motives of the will; so in illumination, it makes use of the imagination: which is the cause that religion hath ever sought an access to the mind, through similitudes, types, parables, and visions<sup>55</sup>.”

<sup>55</sup> De Augm. Scient. lib. v. c. 1.

Should any modern free-thinker feel disposed to smile at this observation of Bacon, it may perhaps check a too hasty decision, by his remembering the more sober neutrality of the Stagirite.—Περὶ δὲ τῆς μαντικῆς, τῆς ἐν τοῖς ὕπνοις γενομένης, καὶ λεγομένης συμβαίνειν ἀπὸ τῶν ἐνυπνίων· οὔτε καταφρονεῖν ῥάδιον, οὔτε πεισθῆναι.—Aristot. De Divin. vol. i. p. 607. Edit. Du Val.

## CHAP. VI.

## TRANSLATION OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

THAT the sacred volume, in manner as well as in matter, is different from all other books, though dictated and recorded in human language, as the indispensable vehicle or instrument of communication, by which the testimony of God, is conveyed to men—is a theological axiom, which has, I hope, been sufficiently established in the preceding pages. This axiom should have a powerful influence upon the particular study and interpretation of that mysterious book.

Other books contain the things which are “on earth,” the observations, experiments, and reasonings of men on material objects, their thoughts, reflections, and reasonings on mental subjects, their testimony of facts and occurrences, or their poetic imitations. These are conveyed in a style as direct as possible, and even when figurative, are

intended to be plain and devoid of mystery. But the book of God contains “the things that are in heaven,” and they are recorded in a language, which is analogical and indirect, which is often figurative, and designedly obscure.

Whilst we view with pleasure the study of the Holy Scriptures shaking off the fetters of hypothetical system, and moving on in a more free and philosophical direction ; whilst we rejoice that the science of theology is liberated from the forms of an ignorant and scholastic logic, and behold with satisfaction the Volume of Inspiration laid open to the discussion of a rational and learned, not visionary criticism, from which we may indulge the hope of receiving a faithful interpretation of all its parts ; we are bound to hold in awful recollection, that it is divine in its origin and mysterious in its form ; that though “ the things which are revealed belong to us and to our children,” to investigate and to contemplate “ the secret things,” which are therein concealed, “ belong unto the Lord our God ;” so to remain, till in his wisdom he open them more fully to our

understandings. This solemn consideration should be kept perpetually in mind ; lest, by exulting too much in the glorious liberty we have gained, critics and interpreters, commentators and translators, grow too bold in their literary career ; and after snapping asunder the chains of prejudice and form, should rush into the opposite, and more dangerous extreme—capricious judgment and fanciful invention.

With this axiom, therefore, constantly in view, we shall descend with advantage from the general interpretation of the Holy Scriptures, through the principles on which it is to be conducted, to their particular interpretation.

The former constitutes the office of the theological critic and commentator ; the latter that of the theological critic and translator. These offices, however connected and allied, are so distinct in their peculiar exercise, that they should never be confounded. The province of the commentator is more extensive and enlarged ; that of the translator more verbal and confined. Though



both offices may be discharged by one individual, unless he recognise this distinction he will probably do more injury than service, to the cause of scriptural learning. The view, however, which has been taken of the former will lead us to the true principle of criticism and the just method of translating, according to which the latter should be conducted. The divine analogy of scripture language which pervades the sacred volume, and the frequent use of the parabolical style, so important in its intention, will strongly remind the translator of the delicacy and difficulty of his undertaking. They will admonish him, that the task of presenting the Bible in a new language is peculiarly sacred, to be executed with far more caution and fidelity, than that of translating any other book.

Amongst the many blessings which Providence hath bestowed on this favoured country, in different periods of its history, is the English Translation of the Bible, appointed to be read in Churches, which for some ages it has enjoyed. Whilst gratitude compels us to set a high value upon a work, by which

our forefathers were instructed to serve their God, justice will also oblige us to think and speak favourably of its intrinsic merit. The men, to whose learning and labour we are indebted for this translation, were selected for the task by the discernment of a pious and learned prince, and were endowed with every qualification of heart and understanding, and possessed of every advantage of learning and erudition for the execution of the work, which the state of biblical knowledge, and the religious complexion of their times afforded. They availed themselves largely and judiciously of the learning and labours of former translators, both Latin and English, and it may be considered, as an encomium adequate to the best efforts of human ability, if we say, that, upon the whole, they far excelled all their predecessors. Their language is plain, nervous, dignified ; and whatever be the defects of this translation in other respects, this version will, in general, ever remain the object of our admiration and gratitude.

After paying this tribute of praise, so justly due, to our English version, truth obliges us

to own, that the translators, however able, laboured under unavoidable difficulties and disadvantages, by which they were obstructed, at that time, in the execution. These are now removed, and if, from the present improved and improving state of biblical learning, the change of circumstances in favour of the present age, and with the aid of their excellent translation, we presume, that, as they improved on their predecessors, they may also be improved on in their turn,—the presumption, at least the hope, can neither appear ungenerous towards them, nor unreasonable in itself.

To procure an accurate and perfect text, is the first step towards a good translation. Without this advantage, whatever other excellence the version may possess, it can be at best only a perfect copy of an imperfect original<sup>1</sup>.

Such a text can be obtained only by a comprehensive investigation, and critical examination of the most authentic monu-

<sup>1</sup> See Bishop Marsh's Lectures, parts i. ii.

ments and authorities of the sacred volume, by an extensive collation of ancient manuscripts, and by the collateral elucidations of more ancient versions from manuscripts more perfect than any which now exist.

It is the chief disadvantage of our English version of the Old Testament, that it was formed on the Hebrew text,—the text of these later ages, miserably changed, corrupted, and adulterated (and even that imperfectly interpreted); rather than on the Septuagint version, which was made from more perfect copies, in an early age, when the ancient Hebrew must necessarily have been far better understood. It was translated by a constellation of the most learned Hellenistic Jews, from one of the most imperfect, into the most perfect and universal tongue which was ever spoken. From this Septuagint version, our Lord and his apostles have adduced nearly all their quotations in the New Testament. In consequence of this radical error, the immediate relation and connexion between the Old and New Testaments is much injured, as the New Testament was translated from the Greek, in

which it was written. The consequence is, that our Scripture phraseology is not so uniform as it ought to be, as was manifestly designed by the Inspirer, and as our Lord and his apostles have exemplified by their numerous quotations in the exact words of the Septuagint.

This statement of the case will, I know, not meet with the assent and approbation of some, who affect great and superior learning, from having studied the Hebrew and other oriental tongues, and whose reputation for a study which is little understood, prevails with too many, blindly to subscribe to their opinion. But, from the native imperfection of all original languages, from the great difficulty of understanding them in ages so far distant from their living use, and above all, from the sanction of the practice and authority of Christ and his apostles, I will maintain this opinion of the paramount importance of the LXX version. I would not undervalue the Hebrew manuscripts. I contend only, that the Greek translation should be made the standing basis of an English version of the Old Testament, even as the Greek

text is that of the version of the New ; and that the Hebrew and other ancient versions should be consulted and collated with it, that any occasional light and assistance might be derived.

The imperfect state of biblical learning, particularly grammatical, thwarted at the time the success of our English translators, on account of which, they could not have recourse to documents and authorities sufficient to prepare a model thus corrected and improved. Too confidently persuaded of the genuineness of the Masoretic text, corrupted by the ignorance and inaccuracy of transcribers, and disguised by the punctuations and sinister practices of the more modern Jews, devoted to rabbinical prejudices which it was made to countenance, and from want of more ancient and authentic copies,—they translated from false and imperfect originals<sup>2</sup>. However exact and scrupulously faithful in verbal translation, depending entirely upon these, and neglecting more ancient and genuine authorities, their version would unavoidably possess all their prejudices and defects ;

<sup>2</sup> See Lowth's Preface to Isaiah, and Kennicott's Dissertations.



whilst, by too much depending on modern lexicons, they have occasionally misinterpreted the meaning of many separate words.

When the true text is determined and restored, it is the next qualification of the scriptural translator, on the principles of just criticism and by a rational method of interpretation, to express the exact sense of the author fairly and impartially. It is not, however, to be disguised, that attachment to sect and the love of system, inflamed by habits of disputation and polemical divinity, though more temperate in these translators, than in some of their predecessors, has occasionally produced an insensible bias on their judgment.

To these radical and permanent causes of imperfection, in the translators of the present version, another may be added, which is the effect of time and accident. In the constant flux of the English, as of every living language, some of our words have lost their meaning and become obsolete ; others have changed, and become antiquated ; whilst in many places, the grammatical construction is awkward, and occasionally confused.

From these and other reasons which might

be assigned, particularly the want of uniformity from the cause already mentioned, we need not hesitate to pronounce, that in our present translation, such mistakes and imperfections were unavoidable, without any disrespect to the memory, or derogation from the acknowledged merit of these excellent and learned men.

Conscious of these numerous defects, and convinced of the paramount importance of the sacred volume, and of the duty incumbent upon us to preserve the genuine meaning of every word which it contains ; it were almost as disgraceful, for this age of improved learning and reformed religion, (when the remains of every classical author are brought forward in elegant versions), to suffer the Bible to continue under the imperfections of the present authorised translation, as it was heretofore the reproach of ignorance and superstition, to prohibit its being translated at all.

Since the commencement of this century, biblical learning has greatly flourished in the universities of Europe ; and it is, from being

conducted on just and rational principles, and from the joint studies of the learned of different countries and communities, joining hand in hand in promoting the great work, that the volume of Scripture may be restored to its purity and perfection. At length the rage for system and hypothesis has much subsided. We rejoice to see the ancient scholastic discipline on the decline; and we congratulate the learned, on turning their attention, from useless words and forms, to things of real importance, and on applying it to the genuine sources of theological truth, — biblical studies, languages and antiquities. Before this period, Capellus, with a bold and fearless hand, first essayed to remove the veil of superstition and credulity, which covered the errors and deformities of the Jewish originals, and thus emancipated the study of the Scriptures, from those Masoretic prepossessions and rabbinical prejudices, to which it had been so long confined. But to shake off these chains, so disgraceful and injurious to sound theology, and clear the way to the genuine interpretation of holy writ, was a work reserved for Houbigant, who though

too bold in some of his conjectural emendations of the sacred text, presented the world with an excellent version of the Old Testament, from a copy corrected with great learning, grammatical skill, and critical acumen, as a model for the imitation of all future improvers of biblical learning. As a sacred critic and translator, Houbigant holds the foremost rank, and is entitled to the choicest laurel. He has the honour to be followed by Lowth and Michaelis, who succeeded him in this high walk of sacred criticism ; whose labours, though sometimes perhaps imitating the conjectural decisions of their leader, more than the principles of sacred criticism will sanction, are judicious and well-conducted upon the whole, and are followed and improved by learned men of our own and other nations. By their concurrent labours, since the charm was broken, many prejudices and obstacles are now removed, and thus the avenues to the sacred study of the Scriptures have been gradually laid open<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> Marsh's Lectures, part ii.

Under the direction of such leaders, sacred learning hath gone on improving and to be improved. The first duty consists, as we have observed, in an extensive and critical collation and comparison of manuscripts, parallel places, quotations, versions, and editions. In this laborious department of biblical learning, the lucubrations of Kennicott hold a distinguished rank. The second act, consequent on the former, is a new translation of the Bible, or rather perhaps an amended edition of the present. Some few of the learned, actuated more by an honest zeal for the present translation, than directed in judgment by a knowledge of the true merits of the question, have strenuously opposed this work, as in itself unnecessary, as hazardous in its execution, or even dangerous in its effect. Others, directed by better information, have been, and at this time are employed, in the useful, but arduous undertaking, with every advantage of sagacity, learning, and impartiality on their side, encouraging our ardent hopes, and promising to realise our

sanguine expectations<sup>4</sup>. They are not, however, exactly agreed as to the just and true method of scriptural translation,—a question of the last importance to the success of this great work, and which should be previously settled and determined. Without some general agreement of principles, there can be no uniformity of purpose or effect. But, from the liberal, friendly, and unassuming spirit which they breathe towards each other, and which is so manly and generous, as to win the approbation and assistance of every one who can in the least contribute to the promotion of this noble design, we may cherish a lively hope, that one uniform, rational, and judicious plan will be finally adopted and invariably pursued.

When the text of the original has been carefully and scrupulously adjusted, it is the sound and accurate judgment, which apprehends the precise meaning of the words, distinguishes the idioms, and considers the

<sup>4</sup> Bp. Newcome, Dr. Blaney, Dr. Geddes, Dr. Campbell, Dr. Macknight, and others.



genius of the respective languages of the original and the version, which constitutes the general qualification of a competent translator. Without this discrimination, he would be unable to give a just representation of any composition, whether profane or sacred. But the exact method, and the particular rules, by which the work is to be conducted, should be formed on principles, derived from the nature and genius of the original documents.

The theological axiom, therefore, which has been laid down in the preceding pages,—“That the Holy Bible, in its origin and formation, is essentially distinct from all books of human composition, however different they may be from each other,”—will require, that distinct rules should be observed in its translation, as well as exposition. In support of this opinion, let me again appeal to the judgment of Lord Bacon, whose authority, on all subjects of literature, is justly acknowledged to be supreme and decisive. “The Scriptures being given by inspiration, and not by human reason, do differ from all books in the Author; which by consequence

doth draw on some difference to be used by the expositor<sup>5</sup>.”

How far human judgment may be exercised in translating the word of God, is the great question, in the precise solution of which many different opinions always have divided, and still continue to divide the learned. Till this question be decided on a firm and philosophic ground, though our present translators may possess more biblical knowledge and enjoy more advantages than their predecessors, their labours must exhibit an unequal and imperfect representation of the sacred text. On this topic, therefore, we shall now venture a few observations.

Since the Bible has one thing in common with all other books,—that it is written in human language—it is the chief cause of our different opinions, and most certainly the chief cause of ill-success, that learned men, some more, and some less, according to their personal taste and private judgment, bring their rules and ideas of translation, as well as of interpretation, from classical books, to the

<sup>5</sup> The Advancement of Learning, b. ii. p. 326, edit. 1633.

sacred volume. “ This manner of interpreting,” says Lord Bacon, “ seems, at first sight, sober and chaste; yet notwithstanding, it both dishonoureth Scripture, and is a great prejudice and detriment to the church: and this is, to speak in a word, when divinely inspired Scriptures are expounded, after the same manner, that human writings are. For it must be remembered, that there are two points known to God, the author of Scripture, which man’s nature cannot comprehend, that is, the secrets of the heart, and the successions of times, which do make a just and sound difference between the manner of exposition of the Scriptures, and all other books. For it is an excellent observation, which hath been made upon the answers of our Saviour Christ, to many of the questions, which were propounded to him,—that they are impertinent to the question demanded. The reason whereof is, that, not being like man, which knows man’s thoughts by his words, but knowing man’s thoughts immediately and of himself, he never answered their words, but their *thoughts*. And another reason is, that he spake, not only to them that were then

present, but to us also, who now live, and to men of every age and place, to whom the Gospel shall be preached ; which sense, in many places of scripture must take place. Much in like manner, it is with the Scriptures, which, being written to the thoughts of men, and to the succession and vicissitude of all ages, with a certain foresight of all heresies, contradictions, differing and mutable estates of the church, as well in general as of the elect in special, are not to be interpreted only, according to the latitude of the proper sense of the place and respectively towards that present occasion, whereupon the words were uttered, or in precise congruity or contexture with the words before or after, or in contemplation of the principal scope of the place ;— but have in themselves, not only totally and collectively, but distinctively in clauses and words, infinite springs and streams of doctrine to water the church in every part ; and therefore since the literal, is, as it were, the main stream or river ; so the moral sense chiefly, and, sometimes the allegorical or typical, are they whereof the church hath most use. Not that I wish men to be bold in allegories, or

indulgent, or light in allusions ; but, that I do much condemn that interpretation of the Scripture, which is only, after the manner that men use to interpret a profane book<sup>6</sup>.”

These observations apply to particular, rather than to general interpretation ; and if our translators would honour this instruction of our great luminary of science, with the attention it deserves, it would supply them with a general principle, philosophically grounded, from which, certain rules of translating would be easily deduced, and by which they might uniformly and successfully conduct their labours. And surely men, who are equally distinguished for their candour and learning, will not disdain to be directed in their interpretation of the volume of Grace, by the light which has led Newton through that of Nature, to the confines of the universe. This principle will admonish them, that, while unfolding the oracles of God, by presenting them in a vernacular tongue to the inhabitants of whole nations, they “ tread on holy

<sup>6</sup> This extract is taken partly from his Latin treatise *De Augm. Scient.* lib. ix. and partly from his English work “ *Of the Advancement of Learning*,” b. ii. p. 329.

ground.” It will warn them, “to put their shoes from off their feet,” and to advance with fear and trembling ; lest by a mixture of human art, they injure, or misrepresent, the dictates of Him, who hath awfully declared —“heaven and earth shall pass away,—but my Word shall not pass away<sup>7</sup>.”

As it is his duty to give a faithful picture of the original, it is a rule of the first importance for the successful translator of the Holy Scriptures, though one of the most difficult to put effectually in practice, to divest himself of every kind of prejudice or bias. Prejudice insinuates itself insensibly into the mind, and is there so confirmed by time and habit, that it is the enemy in our own bosom, the most difficult to conquer. But prejudices in religion, imbibed at the breast, and cherished, not only with fondness, but with eager and intemperate zeal, are still more obstinate and inveterate than others. To avoid all partial and private interpretation, the bane of sound

<sup>7</sup> Matt. xxiv. 35.



theology, he should banish from his mind all systems and hypotheses of human invention. He should divest himself of those narrow habits of thinking, which he may have contracted in the use of a dogmatical and artificial logic. He should forget the very persuasion, however orthodox and pure, in which he was bred. He should be constantly and religiously on his guard, lest the spirit of a sect supersede that of a Christian, and lest he show himself the disciple of man, rather than “taught of God<sup>8</sup>.”

Yet, since human language hath been

<sup>8</sup> In this fundamental rule, all our present translators pronounce themselves agreed.

“The critical sense of passages should be considered, and not the opinions of any denomination of Christians.—The translation should be philological, not controversial.”—Bp. Newcome’s Rule xii. Pref. to Translation of the Twelve Minor Prophets, p. 37.

“Unwedded to systems of any kind, literary, physical, or religious, a translator of the Bible should sit down to render his author, with the same impartiality, he would sit down to render Thucydides or Xenophon. He should try to forget that he belongs to any particular society of Christians; be extremely jealous of his own rational prepossessions; keep all theological consequences, as far out of his sight as possible, and investigate the meaning of his original, by the rules only of sound and sober criticism, regardless of pleasing or displeasing any party.”—Dr. Geddes’ Prospectus, p. 141, 142.

“Of such consequence it is to a translator, to banish all

employed as the vehicle of divine revelation, however analogically expressed, we need not hesitate in concluding, that it is to be understood and construed, according to the grammar of the tongue, in which the revelation was given, and to be translated according to that, into which the version is to be rendered.

Thus far, the laws of translation, whether sacred or profane, perfectly coincide. In other respects they materially differ, according to the different nature of the works, on which the translator is employed, as Lord Bacon has judiciously observed. And first, in point of propriety—

party considerations, to forget, as far as possible, that he is connected with any party, and to be ever on his guard, lest the spirit of the sect absorb the spirit of the Christian, and he appear to be the follower of some human teacher,—of Calvin, Arminius, Socinus, Pelagius, Arius, or Athanasius, than of our only divine and rightful teacher Christ.”—Dr. Campbell’s *Dissertations to his Translation of the Gospels*, p. 518.

“A translator is bound to abstract from, and, as far as possible, forget all sects and systems, together with the polemic jargon, which they have been the occasion of introducing. His aim ought to be invariably to give the untainted sentiments of the author, and to express himself, in such manner, as men would do, amongst whom such disputes had never been agitated.”—*Ibid.* p. 510.

I. Presuming, that human judgment is generally commensurate with human compositions, the classic translator, if duly qualified for his office, sits down to the task of rendering it in another language, on terms of familiarity, nay, almost of equality with his author. That the new dress which he is forming may sit with ease, and appear with elegance; that it may lose the stiffness, which the peculiarities of the original language would entail, he gives both the words and sentences, such an idiomatical change, as may enable him, to cast the sense more freely into the mould of the translation, and thus to give it the air of originality. In short, he takes the thoughts of the author, and exhibits them in his own style and expression<sup>9</sup>.

But, so far from presuming that his judgment is equally commensurate with a divine production, the devout translator of the Holy Scriptures will sit down to the work, impressed with the sense of this awful truth,—

<sup>9</sup> Vide Huet. de Interpretatione et de claris Interpretibus. Stadæ, 1680; and Tytler on Translation.—*Editor*.

that—"the thoughts of God are not as man's thoughts, nor his ways," or words, "as those of men;" that the matter of Revelation is more the object of faith, than of intellect, and that the form is sacred, and frequently ambiguous<sup>10</sup>. He will not, therefore, feel himself, on the same terms of ease and familiarity with his author, nor represent his words and sentences, with that freedom of change, which his own judgment might direct, his fancy suggest, or which he might think the genius or elegance of his language would require; conscious that, as they stand in the original, they may be intended to convey a meaning, which by such change might be injured or lost. He will consequently endeavour, first, to discover the true literal, and grammatical sense; and then content himself, with making choice of such words and sentences, as may, in his own language, most fully and literally express its meaning. In the propriety of this rule, all our translators

<sup>10</sup> "I do much condemn," says Bacon, "that interpretation of Scripture, which is only, after the manner, that men use to interpret a profane book."—*Advance of Learning*, book ii.

seem agreed<sup>11</sup>; though, from their difference of judgment in its execution, they vary widely, in the practice.

As there are no two languages, which have a perfect synonymy and coincidence of words, the observance of this rule will often become a task of the greatest difficulty. To cope with this obstacle, the translator should possess a very extensive knowledge of both languages. He should discriminate with the nicest accuracy, and select with the maturest deliberation.

<sup>11</sup> " The first and principal business of a translator is to give the plain and grammatical sense of his author, the obvious meaning of his words, phrases, and sentences; and to express them in the language, into which, he translates, as far as may be, in equivalent words, phrases, and sentences. Whatever indulgence may be allowed him in other respects, however excusable he may be, if he fail of attaining the elegance, the spirit, the sublimity of his author (which will generally be in some degree the case, if his author excels at all in these qualities); want of fidelity admits of no excuse, and is entitled to no indulgence. This is peculiarly so, in subjects of high importance, such as the Holy Scriptures; in which, so much depends on the phrase and expression; and particularly in the prophetic Books of Scripture, where, from the letter, are often deduced deep and recondite senses, which must owe all their weight and solidity, to the just and accurate interpretation of the words of the prophecy. For, whatever senses are supposed to be included in the prophet's words, spiritual, mystical, allegorical, analogical, or the like; they must all entirely depend on the literal sense. This is

According to the direction of Houbigant, “Non fieri potest, ut duarum linguarum paria verba semper paribus respondeant; verba sunt ponderanda, non numeranda<sup>12</sup>.” Even words which correspond etymologically, do not always correspond virtually; so that, however much a translation of the Bible, which is strictly literal might be desired, it is impossible, from these differences in all languages, that a good literal translation should ever be obtained<sup>13</sup>. It is well known,

the only foundation, upon which, such interpretations can be securely raised; and if this is not firmly and securely established, all that is built upon it will fall to the ground.”—Bp. Lowth’s Preliminary Dissertation to Isaiah, p. lii.

Bishop Newcome’s first rule is,—“The translator should express every word of the original, by a literal rendering, where the English idiom admits of it, and where not only purity, but perspicuity and dignity of expression can be preserved.”—Pref. to Translation of the Twelve Minor Prophets, p. xvii.

“First of all, a translator of the Bible ought to be faithful; that is, ought to express all the meaning, and no more, than the meaning of the original.”—Geddes’ Prospectus, p. 126.

“The first thing a translator has to do, is to give a just and clear representation of the sense of the original, which is the most essential of all.”—Campbell, Dissertation x. part i.

<sup>12</sup> Prolegomena, cap. v. art. 3.

<sup>13</sup> “It is absolutely impossible to translate literally from any language whatever, without being often barbarous, obscure, and equivocal.”—Dr. Geddes’ Prospectus, p. 127.



that those who have been most scrupulously attached to the letter, are, on account of these differences, often the furthest from the literal and grammatical sense,—the first object of all scriptural translation<sup>14</sup>.

This peculiar difficulty has beset all biblical translators, and divided them in their judgment of the proper nature and limits of their office. Some, and these learned men, on considering this difference, inherent in the texture and formation of languages, and observing, that those, who adhered the closest to the letter, were the furthest from the sense, have felt the difficulty attending a literal version insurmountable, and taken refuge, in a more loose and distant mode of translating. The idea of a literal translation of Scripture should not, however, be abandoned. Though words cannot be made to correspond to words, either as to their number, synonymy, or etymology; yet there is a middle way, though sometimes difficult to be found, by which, they may be brought to

<sup>14</sup> Pagninus and Montanus are less faithful guides than even Castalio, Michaelis, or Wynne.

correspond in equivalence and effect. Thus the translation, though not strictly, may be virtually literal. Such a translation, our principle, which considers the Bible as a divine production, not only countenances, but requires: and however others may indulge their genius, in taking greater liberty with the words of inspiration, consistency will support us in subscribing to the opinion of Beza, as far as the difference of the languages will admit,—“*Quo propius abest a Græcis et Hebræis Latina interpretatio, eo mihi magis probanda videatur*<sup>15</sup>.”

But the idioms of language differ still more than the words, and the translator of a profane author would not be read or tolerated, who does not invariably make the change, and adopt that of his own language. In translating the sacred volume, the principle, which has been already laid down, will,

<sup>15</sup> Beza, *Nov. Test. Dedicat.*

“Where a verbal translation cannot be interwoven, one equivalent to it should be substituted, and the idiom [or the word] in the text should be literally rendered in the margin.”  
—Bp. Newcome, rule iii. p. 23.

for the same important reasons, prescribe to its translator a different rule of conduct. To retain all the minute peculiarities, in an English translation, would, I acknowledge, be unnecessary, and indeed absurd. Fortunately however, for the close coincidence of idiom and phrase with the original, in all matters of more essential importance, there is a singular coincidence and similarity between the Hebrew and English tongues<sup>16</sup>. Many of the principal Hebraisms had long appeared, in an English dress, in former translations, and are become so familiar by frequency of repetition, that the ear would now feel itself strange, and even offended, by their omission. They possess also that dignity, which antiquity confers on every thing, with which, it is associated. Imparting a warmth and

<sup>16</sup> "Our language easily moulds itself into the Hebrew form; and it rarely happens, that we are under any necessity of having recourse to paraphrase and circumlocution, to express the full meaning of the text. Even when the syntactical arrangement is different, there is a striking equipollence of simplicity, conciseness, and energy, to be attained, which, perhaps, no modern language can boast of; and which is not found in ours, with regard to any other language, but the Hebrew."—Dr. Geddes' Prospectus, note, p. 128.

animation, unknown to modern languages, they raise the English above its natural level, and qualify it to become the consecrated vehicle of theological truth.

“There is a certain coldness,” says the judicious Addison, “in the phrases of our European languages, when compared with the oriental forms of speech; and it happens very opportunely, that the Hebrew idiom runs into the English tongue, with a peculiar grace and beauty. Our language has received innumerable elegances and improvements from that infusion of Hebraisms, which are derived to it out of the poetical passages in holy writ. They give force and energy to our expression, warm and animate our language, and convey our thoughts in more ardent and intense phrases, than any that are to be met with, in our own tongue. There is something so pathetic in this kind of diction, that it often sets the mind in a flame, and makes our hearts burn within us. If any one should judge of the beauties of poetry, which are to be met with in the divine writings, and examine how kindly the Hebrew manners of speech mix and

incorporate with the English language ; after having perused the book of Psalms, let him read a literal translation of Horace and Pindar, and he will find, in these two last, such an absurdity and confusion of style, with such a comparative poverty of imagination, as will make him very sensible of what I have been here advancing<sup>17</sup>.”

Castalio, both in biblical learning and critical judgment, was a superior translator ; but, by an unhappy attempt, to leave the Hebrew idiom, and clothe his version in all the elegance of the Latin phraseology and construction,—upon this principle of profane translation injudiciously applied,—he has not only abandoned the fidelity, as well as others, but has lost all the dignity and simplicity of Holy Scripture. Instead of being all that is elegant, and graceful, and ornamental, as he expected ; every thing is finical and affected, in this fancy-dress ; and all the redundancy of the polish, submits not only to the simplicity of his rival Beza, but often to the more servile representations of Tremellius and

<sup>17</sup> Spectator.

Junius,—nay, occasionally—even to the barbarisms of Montanus and Pagninus<sup>18</sup>.

For these, among other reasons, a critical revision and improved edition of the old, seems more desirable, than a new translation. Not only the Hebrew idiom, but as many of the words as possible of the old translation, should be retained, on account of their simplicity and dignity, and also to indulge the honest prepossessions of the people<sup>19</sup>. The remark, from whatever quarter it may have come, is very justly made,—“that common

<sup>18</sup> On the comparative merits of these Latin translators, consult Simon's Critical History; Huet. de Interpret. lib. ii. cap. 3; and Macknight's Preface and Preliminary Essays before his Translation of the Epistles.—*Editor*.

<sup>19</sup> When the terms and phrases, employed by former interpreters, are well adapted for conveying the sense of the author, they are justly preferred to other words equally expressive and proper; but which, not having been used by former interpreters, are not current in that application.”—Campbell's Diss. xi. p. 521.

“Words that are too fine, too learned, or too modern, are repugnant to the style of the sacred penmen, are too flowery, affected, and modish, to suit their style, which is eminently natural, simple, and dignified. And, on the other hand, words which are low and vulgar, are still more derogatory, from the exalted sublimity of the subject and language of Holy Scripture.”—*Ibid*. Diss. xi. p. 570.

“The simple and ancient turn of the present version should be retained.”—Bp. Newcome, rule vi. p. 32.



minds can discriminate with difficulty between the language and the substance; and in losing the one, they will be, in no little anxiety about the other; besides, that the long use of writings avowedly sacred, gives a venerable air to the language, and seems almost to consecrate it to the service of religion<sup>20</sup>."

But, to sanction this general reasoning in support of the preservation of the ancient idiom, we have two precedents, whose authority will be admitted as unquestionable. The Septuagint is a translation of the Old Testament, of very high, if not of divine authority; in which, though the language be Greek, the idiom is uniformly Hebrew. And in the New Testament itself, though the words are Greek, the ideas are Jewish, and the idiom Hebrew; which afford a convincing proof, that the original idiom should at any rate be preserved<sup>21</sup>.

<sup>20</sup> Critical Review, Nov. 1789.

<sup>21</sup> A Septuagint edition of the Greek Testament, that is, an edition, illustrated throughout by references to the LXX. is a great desideratum. Such an edition has long been contemplated by the Editor, but the risk and labour are too great for an individual. It should be undertaken by some

But, besides the words and idioms, the peculiar spirit, style, character, and manner of each sacred writer, should form an object of the translator's care, the transfusion of which into our own language, constitutes, in the opinion of our modern translators, the main difficulty and chief merit of their office<sup>22</sup>. Yet these are niceties still more arbitrary and uncertain, than either words or idioms, varying more amongst individual authors, than any mere difference of phrase or idiom ; and to transfuse them in translation, is an effort of imitation, which seems somewhat

public body. He would willingly communicate his references, amounting to several thousand, arranged under chapter and verse.—*Editor*.

<sup>22</sup> "It is incumbent on every translator to study the manner of his author ; to mark the peculiarities of his style ; to imitate his features, his air, his gesture, and, as far as a different language will permit, even his voice ; in order to give a just and expressive resemblance of the original."—Lowth. Prelim. Diss. to Isaiah xxxv.

"The second thing a translator has to do, is, to convey into his version as much as possible, in consistency, with the genius of the language which he writes, the author's spirit and manner, and, if I may so express myself, the very character of his style."—Campbell's Diss. x. part 1.

"The fifth quality of a good translation is that diversity of style which characterized the different Scripture writers,

fanciful and capricious, depending rather on the taste and genius, than the sound judgment of the translator. This favourite rule is obviously borrowed from profane translation, without sufficiently attending to the peculiar nature of inspired productions. It is far too vague and licentious, for the severe principle of scriptural translation. The translator should reflect, that by labouring to observe this rule, he is in danger of infringing all the preceding canons; to which, he is far more strictly bound, and thus of eventually counteracting his own design.

To give his production all the beauties and

which, however difficult to attain, ought certainly, by all means, to be aimed at.—Every writer, whether sacred or profane, has something peculiar to himself, and it ought to be the endeavour of a translator, to retain as much as possible of that peculiarity.”—Geddes’ Prospectus, pp. 137, 138. This learned author then quotes the above words of Bishop Lowth, as authority, which, I hope, he does not embrace, without considering what precedes and follows them.

“To convey into his version, as much of his author’s spirit and manner, as the genius of the language which he writes will admit,” is the second qualification of a Scripture translator mentioned by Dr. Campbell; and Mr. Wakefield is of opinion, that a considerable share of human ingenuity and invention is requisite, in order to preserve this spirit and manner. See his Preface.

advantages of the original, the translator of a human work, especially if poetical, perceives, that in this imitation, lies his fullest and fairest scope, and that his success will depend chiefly on his own poetic genius. In the execution, therefore, he not only varies many of the words and idioms of the original, but occasionally the figures, and flies to the resources of his imagination, to supply him with others. These, whilst on the whole, they impart the thought, suit the nature and elegance of his own phraseology, and rise to that height of spirit and animation, and that peculiar style and character, which he conceives his author to possess. And if, to exalt and improve these qualities, he should occasionally give a new turn to the thought, the licence has been commended ; as by thus enabling the author to shine in the version, with a higher lustre than his own, he compensates for some of those peculiar beauties, in which, every translator must fall short of his original. And, however different it may be, in some particular passages, should the translation produce the general *effect* of the original, the translator has arrived at the summit

of his art, to which, though all hope and imagine they have attained, their success must be in proportion to their genius, and thus their imitations become as diversified as their taste.

Such imitation of the style, character, and manner of the sacred writers, whose language is always analogical, and often more highly figurative than the classic authors, is an effort of human genius, of which, I humbly conceive, the nature of the originals and the severe laws of translation which they dictate, cannot in any great degree, permit. This would be to mix too much of what is vague and human, with what is unchangeable and divine; and is altogether subversive of that literal and idiomatical fidelity, for which we have been so earnestly contending.

The late learned and ingenious prelate, to whom biblical learning is so much indebted, but who brought rather too much classical refinement, to the criticism of sacred poetry, has introduced this imitative translation also from classical authors, to the sacred volume; under the persuasion, that it was perfectly

compatible with a strictly literal version. Here the same questions recur, with respect to translation, which were proposed, in regard to criticising inspired productions.—How far is this imitation to be carried? and who shall draw the line, where it is to stop?—He has ably observed, that in translating the works of the best classic poets, much depends, not only on giving the sense of the author with equal force and elegance, but in catching his characteristic features, his complexion, his personal mien and motion. And he owns, that whoever has thus attempted to translate the sacred poets into Greek or Latin verse, if not quite inferior, must necessarily be quite dissimilar to them<sup>23</sup>. Yet notwithstanding this concession, he has himself attempted to reconcile this personal

<sup>23</sup> In exprimendis alia lingua egregiorum poetarum operibus, multum in eo positum est, ut non tantum iidem sint intimi sensus, par in sensibus explicandis vis et venustas; sed ut, quantum fieri potest, externa etiam oris lineamenta effingantur, ut suus cuique color atque habitus, suus etiam motus et incessus tribuatur. Qui itaque sacros vates Græco vel Latino carmine exprimere, adeoque eorum veluti personam sustinere conati sunt, fieri non potuit, quin toto genere et forma, si non inferiores, multum certe ab iis dissimiles essent.—Præl. iii. p. 43.



and peculiar imitation, with his English version. He declares it to be the design of his translation of Isaiah—"not only to give an exact and faithful representation of the words and the sense of the prophet, by adhering as closely to the letter of the text, and treading as nearly as may be in his footsteps; but also to imitate the air and manner of the author, to express the form and fashion of his composition, and to give the English reader some notion of the peculiar turn and cast of the original<sup>24</sup>." The latter part of this design coincides, he thinks, perfectly with the former; and whatever his success may have been in the execution, his candour deserves to be commended, though it may not accord with consistence. This example, however, rendered the more attractive by the celebrity of his learning, the brilliancy of his genius, the dignity of his station, and the fascinating elegances of his Latin style, others, possessed of less judicious caution, have been too eager to follow, without keeping within the bounds of that imita-

<sup>24</sup> Preliminary Dissertation to Isaiah, p. 1.

tion he has prescribed<sup>25</sup>. They too confidently rely on this false presumption,—that the matter was furnished by the Inspirer, while the form and manner of utterance were left entirely to the natural genius and inclination of the inspired; agreeably to the words of Castalio,—“*Res dictat Spiritus, verba quidem et linguam loquenti aut scribenti liberam permittit*”<sup>26</sup>.”

That inspiration consists in the communication of ideas, not of words, which are only the instrument and mode of that communication, is an opinion confidently maintained by many of the learned; with all deference to whom, I would contend, that the Inspirer was interested in the manner, as

<sup>25</sup> His notion of imitation seems to have gone no further than an attempt to represent the prophet's manner, the form of his composition, and his character as a writer, so far as relates to their verse, measure, and rhythm; without affecting the style properly understood,—the idioms, metaphors, images, and expressions of the sacred writers. This imitation is, perhaps, founded in caprice and fancy, rather than in fixed and certain principles; yet he hoped that it was perfectly consistent with the literal sense.—“I must entreat the reader to be satisfied with my endeavour to express the literal sense—this is what I have endeavoured closely and exactly to express.”—*Ibid.* p. 74.

<sup>26</sup> *Def. contra Bezam.*

well as in the matter, in the words, as well as in the ideas.

In his supernatural intercourse with men, the Almighty has recourse to human instruments. It was shown, in the preceding pages, that he condescended to employ human words to be analogically understood, in order to convey his divine truths to our understandings. But, because the agents are human, no one may presume to take the liberty of giving them any change or different representation, by any effort of human genius. No one may presume to change the words Father, Son, Redeemer, Mediator, which the Inspirer hath adopted. It was also shown, that for special purposes of revelation, he has made use of that parabolical expression, those poetical symbols and figures, which abound in the eastern languages:—and are not these as sacred as those analogical terms<sup>27</sup>?

Upon this ground of reasoning, we may

<sup>27</sup> “Metaphors are in general to be retained, and the substitution or unnecessary introduction of new ones should be avoided. And if the original metaphor cannot be transferred,

justly attribute their different styles, their appropriate spirit and character, to the natural genius, or the particular education of the prophets. Nevertheless, since the Spirit of prophecy employed their language, whatever it might be, with all its images and figures, to his own purposes, it became his instrument, no less than the prophets themselves, and became in that sense, peculiarly his own<sup>28</sup>.

And who can affirm, that this divine afflatus had no concern in the immediate act of animating and forming their several styles? or who shall draw the line or determine precisely, how far it was concerned<sup>29</sup>? Whether

it should be rendered in the margin."—Bp. Newcome, rule vi. p. 35.

<sup>28</sup> Utrumque [τὸ περὶ τὰς νοήσεις ἀδρεπήβολον et τὸ σφοδρὸν καὶ ἐνθουσιαστικὸν πάθος] in hoc argumento usurpamus, atque ita sacris vatibus tribuimus, ut nihil derogemus Divini Spiritus afflatui: etsi suam interea vim propriæ cujusquam scriptoris naturæ atque ingenio concedamus.—Lowth. Præl. xvi.

<sup>29</sup> Hanc speciem ἐνθουσιασμῶ appellarem naturalem, nisi viderer plane inter se repugnantia conjungere: est certe longe diversus, et altioris quidem originis, verus ille et germanus ἐνθουσιασμὸς, eoque nomine unice dignus, quo solummodo Hebræorum poesis sublimior, ac maxime prophetica, incitatur.—Ibid. Præl. xvii.

the Almighty addressed the world by Amos, in the style of a shepherd, by Daniel, in that of a courtier, or by David, in that of a king ; whether he spoke in figures, in symbols, or by double senses, he would mould their minds,—and why not their words, their styles, and even actions, to his heavenly purpose ? And since, under the cover of these styles and symbols, he has generally concealed the main burden of prophetic enunciation from the prophets themselves, this influence may be considered even as more immediate over their language, than over their minds—“ Go thy way, Daniel ; for the *words* are closed up, sealed to the time of the end<sup>30</sup>.”

When the prophetic style conveys a double sense, both literal and figurative, the words are the vehicle of the literal to him who understands the language only ; whilst the literal sense becomes the vehicle of the figurative to him, to whom it may be given to “ discern the things of the Spirit.” But, should the translator, upon the notion of imitating what he imagines to be the style and spirit

<sup>30</sup> Daniel, xii. 9.

of the prophet, in order to transfuse them into his version as his taste and genius may direct, make the least change in the images, or even in the words, the interpreter will in vain seek for the figurative meaning. And however the prophetic sense be couched, whether under metaphors, symbols, or other cover, corresponding ill effects will ensue from such corresponding changes.

“That the difference of style in the writers, who were alike the organs of inspiration, is no objection to their having been inspired,” is a position, therefore, to which I readily concede. The Almighty can employ the organs of free agents, as the instruments of his revelation, without making in them any sensible change. The sacred writers might be permitted to use the style most congenial to their taste and education, whilst the Inspirer was bending it, by his secret operation, to his prophetic purposes, nay, even privately suggesting such words and phrases, such figures and images, as were adapted to this end. This secret and supernatural operation upon the mind of man is the peculiar prerogative of the Holy Spirit, both in his



extraordinary and ordinary communications. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth: even so is every one that is born of the Spirit<sup>31</sup>."

If things therefore were the first object of inspiration, words and forms of words were the second; and the favourite position, that, whatever be the subject-matter, the words and manner are equally their own, upon the strength of which critics and translators make as free with Moses, David, and Isaiah, as with Homer, Sophocles, or Virgil, has no foundation, but in a weak and narrow-minded vanity, by which they aspire to entertain the learned, or astonish the ignorant, in the display of their own ingenuity and invention.

How then, it may be inquired, are the spirit, and manner, and characteristic style of the sacred writers, those prominent and distinctive qualities, to be preserved and

<sup>31</sup> John, iii. 8.

represented in an English translation?—We answer, by rendering them, as verbally and idiomatically as possible, without attempting any fanciful imitation<sup>32</sup>. In this opinion, I have the concurrence of one of the most sober and judicious of our translators, who observes, that, “by a literal rendering, not only the matter of the Scriptures, but the peculiar turn of the language, will be faithfully represented<sup>33</sup>.” And this, I think, will be thus accomplished with a better and more distinct effect, than by the most successful attempts of the translator, who, in spite of his utmost endeavour to vary with the variety of each author, must retain throughout the whole a characteristic similarity of his own. The English tongue, having been long in the habit of expressing Hebrew ideas in Hebrew phrases, has become by usage as well as nature, adapted for this effect. Without labouring to mimic

<sup>32</sup> As the mind of our author excelled, rather in strength and vigour, than in delicacy and refinement of taste, the student should make all due allowance for the severity of these critical animadversions on the polished antagonist of Warburton.—*Editor*.

<sup>33</sup> Bp. Newcome's Pref. to Twelve Minor Prophets, p. 17.

the Jewish character and expression, it can assume them at once, and, however various they may be, they will not only sit with ease, but shine with elegance. That all poetry is confined to metre, is an opinion as false, as it is contracted. Whether the original be in verse or not, the translation, though in prose, will retain the poetic style and spirit, which is the main object, with enough of the measure, to preserve the native animation of the original. This indeed is acknowledged by the late ingenious prelate<sup>34</sup>, who took the lead in imitative translation; who, after labouring, in a preliminary apology, with his utmost ingenuity and address, to ascertain the measure, structure, style, and character of the Hebrew writers,

<sup>34</sup> Duo hic occurrunt adnotanda, quæ ex jam dictis quasi consecraria quædam enascuntur. Primo quidem, Poema ex Hebræa in aliam linguam conversum, et oratione soluta ad verbum expressum, cum sententiarum formæ eædem permanent, multum adhuc, etiam quod ad numeros attinet, pristinæ dignitatis retinebit, et adumbratam quandam carminis imaginem. Hoc, itaque in vernacula sacrorum poematum interpretatione cernitur, ubi plerumque

“Invenias etiam disjecti membra poetæ:”

quod, in Græcis aut Latinis versibus eodem modo conversis, longe aliter eveniret.—Præl. iii.

in order to imitate them, felt, at last, the difficulties and inconsistencies in which he was entangled, and ingenuously confessed, that the subject was sentimental in its foundation, and precarious in its result<sup>35</sup>.

By the rules of propriety, therefore, arising from the principle of scriptural translation, founded on the nature of the Sacred Volume, an English version of the Bible should be as verbal and idiomatical and exactly representative of the original, as the language into which it is made will possibly allow. This rule is strikingly exemplified in the Septuagint version, which is altogether different in its style from any other Greek book.

II. From the rules of propriety, let us proceed, on the same scriptural principle, to consider those of perspicuity,—that other tribunal

<sup>35</sup> "I venture to submit to the judgment of the candid reader the preceding observations upon a subject, which hardly admits of proof or certainty, which is rather a matter of opinion and taste, than of science."—Diss. Prelim. xxxiii.

at which the translators of Scripture are to be examined.

Perspicuity is a quality of the first importance in all human composition, and so essential to its perfection, that whenever an author is obscure, the translator makes no scruple to step out of his province to give him light, even should he be compelled to have recourse to conjecture. The too hasty and licentious use of this licence in criticising and translating classic authors, has however been severely and justly censured. But it has been already observed, that in dictating the Holy Scriptures, obscurity and concealment were often in the original design of the Inspirer: which difference of design will require a very different conduct in the translator. In scriptural translation, therefore, perspicuity should ever give place to propriety; and we should take the utmost care, lest, in the pursuit of the secondary and inferior rule, we lose sight of that which is primary and supreme. As he treads on ground, which is every where sacred, and often involved in mystery, the translator

should religiously confine himself to the literal and grammatical sense of the words. After the text is brought to all the perfection of which it is capable, when that sense is given, should the meaning of the inspired writer remain obscure, or even apparently unintelligible, the severity of the rule, which propriety enjoins, will require, that it be so left,—in a literal and grammatical translation. Even Castalio, though a very free, or rather licentious translator, felt the force and acknowledged the justice of this observation.—“*Hunc locum non intelligo, ideoque ad verbum transtuli.*”

Upon this canon of scriptural translation, the decision of Le Clerc is fully defensible.—“*Translatio, ubi archetypus sermo clarus est, clara, ubi obscurus, obscura esse debet*<sup>36</sup>: whilst that of Houbigant, who, taking his ideas from profane translation, attempts to turn it to ridicule, is unwarrantable: “*Obscurus est non semel Horatius; num igitur laudanda ea erit Horatii Gallica interpretatio, ubi clarus clare, ubi obscurus*

<sup>36</sup> Prolegom. in Pent. Diss. ii. § 4.



obscure loquentem reddit?" And, in a style of triumph over Le Clerc, he proceeds,—“*Dubitandum non esset, quæ Sacri Scriptores scripserunt perspicue scripsisse.*” The observation may be just, if understood with this restriction, that what they were given clearly to understand themselves, and intended that their readers should clearly and immediately understand, they delivered clearly; or, that grammatically they were sufficiently clear;—but, when taken at large, and extended to every sort of perspicuity, it is very fallacious; and, from his high reputation as a biblical critic and translator, this authority hath misled, and is in danger of misleading others<sup>37</sup>.

<sup>37</sup> “Perspicuity is the second most essential quality of a good translator; nor need we the authority of Horace or Aristotle to establish a proposition, so agreeable to common sense.”—Of scriptural translation unfortunately neither Horace nor Aristotle could be judges.—“The Jewish, like all other writers, certainly wrote to be understood.”—These Jewish writers were, in this important respect, totally unlike all other writers.—“The poets and prophets themselves are not obscure on account of their style, which, though bold and figurative, must have been perfectly intelligible when they wrote.”—How far perfectly intelligible? Was it not by that bold and figurative style, that, in their prophetic, the most important, sense, they were often unintelligible?—“A trans-

A sensible translator has observed, on the contrary, that “the Holy Spirit of God often intends a mystery, and so leaves the letter seemingly obscure: such seeming absurdities are left for the honour of God’s Spirit, which clears the difficulty, and sets all right<sup>38</sup>.” Time is the only interpreter, which can throw light on the prophetic event to vindicate this honour, by dispelling all such intended obscurity, and which is not incidental to the language. Critics and translators should, as far as possible, distinguish between these different kinds of obscurity; to the

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lator, therefore, who, under pretext, that his originals are obscure, affects to give an obscure translation, betrays either his idleness or ignorance, offers an insult to his readers, and throws an oblique ridicule on the author he pretends to interpret. If the Scriptures are at all to be translated, of which we have no doubt, they should be made as plain and perspicuous as possible, and not a single ambiguity should be left in them, that can any ways be removed. That there are certain mysterious words of the originals, that should not be rendered, may be a pious, but is not a rational, notion.” —[Dr. Geddes’ Prospectus, pp. 128, 129.]—Without making the just distinction between grammatical or idiomatical and prophetic obscurities, does not this very learned and liberal translator sacrifice propriety to perspicuity, the first law of scriptural translation, to the second?

<sup>38</sup> Dr. Gell.—He was not a translator, but published “An Essay towards the Amendment of the English Translation of the Bible.” London, 1659, folio.—*Editor*.

neglect of which distinction, I am persuaded, we may attribute the different opinions by which they are divided. The latter it is incumbent on the sacred critic and translator to elucidate as far as possible: with the former he has no kind of concern,—he should leave it, in the same literal expression as he finds it<sup>39</sup>. Even, though mysteries may be disclosed to us, in these distant ages, which, when the Scriptures were written, were hid in the womb of time, the translator, whose office is to give the representation, not the explanation of his original, (in which consists the difference between a

<sup>39</sup> “There are some things that our Saviour said, as well as did, to his disciples, which it was not intended they should understand then; but which they would understand afterwards. ‘These things,’ said our Lord, ‘I have spoken to you in figures; the time cometh, when I shall no longer speak to you in figures, but instruct you plainly concerning the Father.’ It was, therefore, not intended that every thing in the Gospel should be announced at first with plainness. It is withal certain, that the veil of figurative language thrown over some things was employed, to shade them only for a time, and, in the end, to conduce to their evidence and greater lustre. “For there was no secret, that was not to be discovered, nor was aught concealed, that was not to be divulged.”—Now justice is not done to the wise conduct of the Spirit, unless things be represented, as nearly as possible, in his own manner.”—Campbell’s Diss. p. 625.

translator and commentator), should not avail himself of this intervening light. He should preserve the cover, under which, the prophetic meaning was originally hidden, though that meaning may now be more clearly understood<sup>40</sup>; and he should keep still more inviolable the veil, under which, future events may yet remain concealed. All that he should attempt or hope, is so to translate the Bible, that it be now as literally understood, as it was when originally written; to make it, if possible, as intelligible to the studious reader of the present age, as the writings of Moses were to the Israelites, and those of the apostles to the ancient Jews<sup>41</sup>. It is the duty of the preacher (and a most essential part of his ministerial function) to make that translation intelligible to the common people.

<sup>40</sup> "Though many of the events foretold which are now accomplished, have put the meaning of such prophecies beyond all question, we ought not, in translating them, to add any light borrowed merely from the accomplishment. By so doing, we may materially injure the history, and render those mistakes incredible, which, on a more exact representation of things, as they must have appeared at the time, were entirely natural."—Campbell's Diss. p. 625.

<sup>41</sup> "It is the duty of a translator to give every thing to his readers, as much as possible, with the same advantages, neither more nor less, with which the sacred author gave it to his contemporaries."—Ibid.

This is that exact and faithful representation, which the dictates of inspiration require, guarded as they are by a solemn prohibition, that not a word shall be added, diminished, or disguised. Though from their greater familiarity with words, idioms, and customs, the contemporaries of a revelation may be supposed to have understood the literal meaning, better than ourselves; we enjoy more of their spiritual import: and, if with such advantages over us, they were suffered to remain under a thicker cloud of darkness,—should we either wonder or repine, that a part of that cloud is still left, or endeavour by a fruitless struggle to remove it? If the translator has reason to suppose, that time has removed the veil from his eye, let him still adhere to his literal duty. As a commentator, he may give the full interpretation in the notes. But where the mystery remains involved in futurity, let him observe the rule of Castalio, an exact, though finical translator, by rendering the words literally, and acknowledging in the margin his ignorance of their real meaning.

In attempting to carry perspicuity, by the

ingenuity of conjecture or by any other means, beyond the limits which propriety prescribes, let the translator of sacred writ awfully reflect, that he, who walks on common earth, is not only stepping out of his own province into the path of an inspired writer, who trod on holy ground, but even mounting over him, by intruding on the prerogatives of the Heavenly Inspirer, who has frequently thought proper to hide his meaning from those, who gave utterance to his words<sup>41</sup>. Nor, because holy scripture is often obscure in the delivery, let him hastily imagine, that it is therefore imperfect, or that it stands in need of his emendation and improvement<sup>42</sup>.

<sup>41</sup> When Caiaphas determined, in council, with reference to Jesus, that "it was expedient one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not,"—the evangelist informs us, "that this he spake not of himself, but, being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation;"—a prediction which he neither intended, nor understood.

<sup>42</sup> See Lowth's Prelim. Dissert. to Isaiah, p. 64.

"I am fully persuaded that the words, as they stand in the present Hebrew text, are utterly unintelligible. There is no doubt of the meaning of them separately; but put together, they make no sense at all—in this difficulty what can be done, but to have recourse to conjecture? This, it may be said, is imposing your sense upon the prophet; but, how-



III. But, though by means of a figurative and parabolical style in all its forms, the Holy Spirit threw a temporary veil over the whole prophetic dispensation, he prepared

ever, it is better, than to impose upon him, what makes no sense at all.”—Lowth on Isaiah, p. 271, 272.

When the text, if wrong, cannot be made right by collation, nothing should, I think, be done, but to translate the words as they stand, *verbatim*.

This reasoning from the principle laid down, may perhaps militate, in some respects, against the fifteenth rule proposed by a very learned prelate, in his preface to his translation of the Twelve Minor Prophets, whose sober and judicious conduct, as a scriptural translator, accords with my opinions on the whole, more than that of any other. “Of dark passages, which exhibit no meaning, as they stand in our present version, an intelligible rendering should be made on the principle of sound criticism.” He then quotes this authority of Bishop Lowth,—“that it is better to impose your own sense upon the prophet, than to impose upon him what makes no sense at all.” As the authority and example of Houbigant misled this author, we cannot wonder that his own should mislead others.

“I cannot help disapproving,” says our northern translator, “the admission of any correction merely on conjecture; for were such a method of correcting to be generally adopted, no bound could be set to the freedom which would be used with sacred writ—this is an extreme, which, should it prevail, would be much more pernicious than the other extreme, of adhering implicitly, with or without reason, to whatever we find in the common edition.” [Campbell’s Dissertation, p. 646.] What he so well observes of correcting, will apply with equal force to translating, by conjecture.

the way for its removal, at the appointed period, by preserving uniformity of language, as the immediate key, to unlock the sacred oracles, when the prophetic events were fulfilled<sup>43</sup>. In addition, therefore, to the rules of propriety and perspicuity, that of uniformity of language should be sacredly regarded, in all scriptural translation.

Prophecy is a system, and notwithstanding the many different styles of Scripture so much contended for by our modern critics, this uniformity is interwoven through every part of the Sacred Volume, which, though written "at sundry times and in divers manners," retains every where the same, or similar, figures and symbols, and frequently the very same words. Possessed only of the Spirit "by measure," the ancient prophets were unacquainted with the whole of that vast dispensation, of which they were the partial instruments, and which was conducted under the omnipresent Eye of that omniscient Mind,

<sup>43</sup> See Davison's Discourses on Prophecy, perhaps the most original work of modern theology.—*Editor*.

to which “a thousand years are as one day.’ The event one foretold partially and darkly, another, at a different period, more fully and clearly signified, in the same style and almost the same words, but with more pointed and particular circumstances. By this consistency, light was reflected from prophecy to prophecy, and the entire system was brought to be illustrative of itself. As the Spirit of prophecy held in contemplation an uniform and consistent series of events, he was no less careful to express these predictions, in a language, which was correspondently uniform and consistent, exactly cast and moulded for the design. This is strikingly apparent through every part of the sacred code ; but is no where more conspicuous, than in the uniformity, which is so wonderfully maintained between the Old Testament and the New. As the prophets were bred in the same school, to qualify them for this necessary uniformity of prophetic language ; so the evangelical writers were all Jews, bred under the law and the prophets, and qualified to transfer it from one dispensation to another, and thus to make

it pervade the whole Inspired system<sup>44</sup>. The Greek is known to differ from the Hebrew and other oriental tongues, as much in idiom and construction, as in character : yet, though the words of the New Testament are Greek, the idiom and phraseology are invariably Hebrew. The whole is, indeed, little else than Hebrew ideas and phrases clothed in Greek. To prepare them for this singular union of adapting the Greek tongue to the Hebrew idiom, and to familiarize it to their use, the Septuagint version of the ancient Scriptures had been providentially made. The Septuagint exhibits Hebrew phraseology in Greek words, and formed the model and staple for the writings of evangelists and apostles. And thus, by this arrangement of Providence, the figurative and symbolical predictions, delivered under the law, are adapted to their correspondencies in the gospel ; in which they were either interpreted, or bequeathed to the future ages of the church.

<sup>44</sup> The reasons assigned by Dr. Campbell, in his *Dissertations*, p. 12, to account for the apostles introducing Hebraisms and Chaldaisms in their writings are extremely defective, as this uniformity of Scripture is, I apprehend, the chief and fundamental cause.

This uniformity<sup>45</sup>, as the key of interpretation, should, therefore, at any rate be

<sup>45</sup> The translator of Ezekiel and the Minor Prophets appears to adopt this rule of uniformity. "The same original and its derivatives according to the leading different senses, and also the same phrase, should be respectively translated by the same correspondent English word or phrase; except where a distinct representation of a general idea, or the nature of the English language, requires a different mode of expression. Not only the sense, but the beauty and force, of many passages depend on a version not deviating from uniformity, without a decisive reason."—Bp. Newcome's Pref. 24, &c.

"A fourth quality of a good translator is as strict an uniformity of style and manner, as is consistent with the foregoing properties."—Dr. Geddes' Prospectus, 136.

I wish the arguments for uniformity, supported by these two great authorities, would weigh with our northern translator of the Gospels, and induce him, either to reconsider the following position, or to be very cautious of indulging in that variety which he seems to cherish: "There are cases wherein some things may be done, nay, ought to be done, by a translator for the sake of variety; for the sacred historians do not always confine themselves to the same words, in expressing the same thoughts. This is owing to a freedom from all solicitude about their language. An unvarying recourse to the same words, for expressing the same thoughts, would, in fact, show one to be solicitous about uniformity, and uncommonly attentive to it."—Campbell's Diss. xii. part 1. p. 594.

The language of the inspired writers is of various kinds; sententious, didactic, parabolical, and narrative; and the uniformity of some may be of more importance than that of others; but to discriminate between them is neither easy, or necessary. Their meaning can be known only from their words, and where these differ, the meaning may not be precisely the same.—This taste for variety is no favourable omen in a sacred translator.

preserved in translation : and on this ground of reasoning, we may subscribe to the joint opinion of Erasmus and Beza :—" *Veterem interpretem,*" says Beza, "*Erasmus merito in eo reprehendit, quod unum idemque vocabulum sæpe diversis modis explicat. Atque in eo ipso quoties peccat? Leviculum hoc est, dices. Ego aliter censeo, nisi cum ita necesse est, in his quidem libris, in quibus sæpe videas mirifica quædam arcana, veluti unius vocabuli involucris, tegi.*"

IV. With regard to the elegances of language and harmony of periods—those qualifications of good translation held in such high esteem by recent translators—they have their chief foundation in the caprice of fashion and in the varying refinements of taste, and are those superficial accomplishments, with which, the translator of a classic author may offer incense to popular fame. He feels himself a kind of rival to his author; is partly interested in his sense, and still more in his language, which, if adorned in the fashionable, yet fading ornaments of the day, may often prove the fairer candidate for



public favour. But the dignity and simplicity of scriptural interpretation, in which the translator has no discretionary power either over the sense or the words, reject all such fanciful and adventitious ornaments. If the grosser inelegances and improprieties of language be avoided,—“*ea effigies laudatur,*” says Le Clerc, “*non quæ vultum formosum, sed qualis est revera spectantium oculis offert*<sup>46</sup>.” The Holy Bible will appear, in a far more characteristic and becoming dress, invested in its native simplicity and grandeur, than if adorned in all the fancy of modern elegance; whether dilated through the artificial and affected sentences of a fashionable historian, or decked in the pompous and unclassical formalities of the Johnsonian period.

The rule of scriptural translation, based on the principle, that—“The Holy Bible, in manner, as well as in matter, is different from all other books, and, therefore, requires a different treatment<sup>47</sup>,”—is more or

<sup>46</sup> Prolegom. in Pent. Diss. ii. sect. 4.

<sup>47</sup> Chap. v. p. 126.

less repugnant to the opinions advanced by our modern translators, and the canons which they severally prescribe. In support of the preceding argument—that a translation of the Bible should be, at once, literal, idiomatic and faithful; without aspiring to elucidate any obscurities, which do not attach to the letter, and uniform in its phraseology—I shall now bring one illustration out of many that might be adduced.

In the 21st chapter of St. Matthew, v. 42, and the 20th of St. Luke, v. 18, our Lord represents himself and the kingdom of the gospel, under the symbol of a *stone* [λίθος,] as the ancient prophets had uniformly done before him<sup>48</sup>. To this symbol, he applies the two verbs συνθλασθήσεται and λικμήσει, figurative expressions, which had also been employed by the ancient prophets<sup>49</sup>. Of the former, translators have given a literal version *confringetur*, “ he shall be broken;” but the latter, which is a bolder figure, taken from the

<sup>48</sup> See Gen. xlix. 24; Isa. xxviii. 16, viii. 14; Dan. ii. 34; Psa. cxvii. 22; Rom. ix. 32, 33; 1 Pet. ii. 8.

<sup>49</sup> Zech. xii. 3; Isa. xxx. 14, xli. 16; Jer. xxxi. 10; Amos, ix. 9.

rustic employment of winnowing corn, like many other prophetic figures, appearing, in their judgment, when applied to a stone in its literal sense, not only obscure but utterly unintelligible; rather than impose on our Lord in their translation, what they thought no sense at all, they judged it better, by some canon of modern criticism, to introduce a meaning of their own invention<sup>50</sup>. Instead of *ventilabit*, “it will blow him away like chaff;” they have therefore rendered it by *conteret*<sup>51</sup>, *comminuet*<sup>52</sup>, “will grind him to powder<sup>53</sup>;” or, as one more lately, “shall crush him to pieces<sup>54</sup>;” in all of which translations, the original figure is totally lost, and substituted by another, and thus the meaning is completely changed<sup>55</sup>. But, after all their labour to give the passage some signification of their own, it has puzzled commentators and critics, more than almost any other in

<sup>50</sup> See Lowth's Notes on Isa. lxiv. 5.

<sup>51</sup> The Vulgate, Erasmus and Castalio.

<sup>52</sup> Beza.

<sup>53</sup> English translation.

<sup>54</sup> Dr. Campbell.

<sup>55</sup> All the translations I have seen entirely misrepresent the figure, except the Gothic of Benzelius, which renders it by *dissipabit*, and gives *ventilabit*, in the margin.—*Author*.

Beza has *dissipabit*. The Vulgate *conteret* in Matthew, and *comminuet* in Luke.—*Editor*.

the Gospels ; insomuch that their explanations are not only vague and conjectural, but absolutely contradictory to each other.

By applying these two figures to the emblem of *the stone*, our Lord was illustrating, confirming, and extending, as he and his apostles often did, two ancient and very important prophecies, in the uniform diction of the ancient prophets. In the verses immediately preceding, he quotes the prophetic words of the 118th Psalm<sup>56</sup>, informing the Jews that they were on the point of fulfilment, by the gospel being taken from them, on account of their inveterate obstinacy, and given to others more qualified to receive it.—“ Did ye never read in the Scriptures,—‘ The *stone*, which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner : this is the Lord’s doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes ?’ Therefore I say unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof<sup>57</sup>. ” And in the next verse, he repeats the same symbol, to which, he applies the two figures in question, confirming also

<sup>56</sup> Verse 22.

<sup>57</sup> Matt. xxi. 42, 43. See Luke, xx. 17.

two further prophecies relating to the Jews. By that of being “broken” [συνθλασθήσεται], he confirms the prediction of Isaiah and Jeremiah, which signified, that, after such rejection from the kingdom of the gospel, the Jews should have their theocratic polity dissolved, and their social community broken.—“Sanctify the Lord your God,” saith Isaiah, “and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread; and he shall be for a sanctuary: but for a *stone* of stumbling, and for a rock of offence to both houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and many among them shall stumble, and fall, and be broken<sup>58</sup> :” which figurative and symbolical denunciation is more directly expressed by Jeremiah, in the emblematic action of breaking the potter’s vessel<sup>59</sup>.—Notwithstanding this severe denunciation, there was a reserve in the divine mercy, in favour of this people of God, that, though rejected and broken, “a remnant should be saved<sup>60</sup>,” and that, however dispersed throughout the

<sup>58</sup> Isa. viii. 13—15.

<sup>59</sup> Compare Isa. xix. and xxx. 14; Jer. xviii. and xix.

<sup>60</sup> See Isa. xxvii. 12, and Rom. xi.

world, they should, at some remote period, be reunited and restored. The main topics of prophetic enunciation were the four great empires of the world ; which, after subverting each other in succession, were finally to give place to this kingdom of *the stone*. By the second figure [λικμήσει], our Lord confirms another illustrious prophecy respecting a different people reserved to a different fate, the last of these empires, the successor and representative of the three former. This prophecy intimated, that this last empire was not only to be broken, as the Jewish polity ; but that every trace and vestige of it should vanish from the earth as a spectre, and be blown away as chaff. The department in the prophetic system, which relates to the future fate and fortunes of this new and spiritual kingdom of *the stone*, fell more especially to the lot of Daniel, whose prophetic words, in his declaration of Nebuchadnezzar's dream, exactly correspond to this figure :—  
“ Thou sawest, till that a *stone* was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the



brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them; and *the stone* that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth<sup>61</sup>.” In the interpretation which directly follows, as translated by the LXX, the prophet explains these last words by *λικμήσει*, the very word which our Lord employs<sup>62</sup>.

Of these three prophecies relating to his gospel, to which Christ gave a confirmation and extension, the two former have been completely and strikingly fulfilled, by the rejection of the Jews, and the dissolution of their polity; whilst no inconsiderable portion of the third has met with its completion, in the successive history of the world. Of the three great prophetic empires, the Babylonish, the Medo-Persian, and the Macedonian, no more trace or vestige hath remained for many ages, than if they had

<sup>61</sup> Dan. ii. 34, 35.

<sup>62</sup> Dan. ii. 44. Ἀναστήσει ὁ θεὸς τῷ ἑρᾶνῃ βασιλείαν—ἥτις λεπτυνεῖ καὶ λικμήσει πάσας τὰς βασιλείας.

never existed. With regard to the fourth, which is the Roman in its full extent, imperial and papal, it has been long on the wane, and seems as a shadow to be vanishing from the globe. “*The stone* that smote the image will become a mountain, and fill the whole earth,”—when “the kingdoms of the world shall become the kingdoms of the Lord and of his Christ<sup>63</sup>.” “But the vision is yet for an appointed time,—in the end, it will speak and not lie<sup>64</sup>.”

Instead of imposing a new sense on the word *λικμήσει*, by which the figure was lost, had the translators only rendered it literally and directly, that uniformity would have been preserved, which is the true key of interpretation<sup>65</sup>. Then, instead of having recourse to conjecture and invention to remove the supposed difficulty of the passage (which arises from a false translation), commentators would have been led to its just interpretation in the book of Daniel; and one of the most

<sup>63</sup> Rev. xi. 15.

<sup>64</sup> Hab. ii. 3.

<sup>65</sup> Inde hoc saltem collegi potest, uno eodemque vocabulo Græcum scriptorem uti; ideoque locum unum cum altero conferri debere.—Hen. Steph. Præf. in Nov. Test.

important and extensive prophecies of our Lord would not have been lost for so many ages to our understanding<sup>66</sup>.

<sup>66</sup> The Scottish translator, as we have seen, is a strong advocate for variety, as a requisite of scriptural translation; by which, he must frequently sacrifice that uniformity of words and phrases, which is here contended for. In searching after this variety, he has given us no promising specimen of his translation in this passage. He is not only guilty of the same fault with his predecessors, by departing from the literal rendering; but in his love of variety, has differed from them all, and is just so much inferior. Not only has he lost the figure in *λικμήσει*, by rendering it “will crush them to pieces;” but that of *συνθλασθήσεται*, from translating it “bruised” instead of “broken;” by which the prophetic meaning is totally destroyed. His Dissertations promise better: and I hope his version of this passage is not a true specimen of his work, as it is, in every respect, much inferior to the old translation. The symbol, which had been employed by Moses, David, Isaiah, Zechariah, St. Paul, and Christ himself, to represent the kingdom of the gospel, the old translators have distinguished, with the proper article, *the* stone; by which it is rendered particular and supereminent; but Dr. Campbell has diminished it into *a* stone, making it general and common. In our Lord’s prediction of the rejection of the Jews and the call of the Gentiles, the words *καὶ ἔσι θαυμασὴ ἐν ὀφθαλμοῖς ἡμῶν*, which the old translation rendered, “and it is marvellous in our eyes;” he has rendered, “and we beheld it with admiration.” Now, wonder or surprise, expressed by marvellous, is one idea; whilst admiration, though akin, is quite another, having in it a mixture of love and approbation: in which sense, the Jews, of whom the words are spoken, could not be supposed to view their own rejection.—*Author*.

Dr. Campbell’s translation is unquestionably wrong; but this observation is not very apposite. The words in question form part of an exact quotation from the LXX. Ps. cxvii. 23. —*Editor*.

An unprejudiced, literal, faithful, and uniform translation of the whole Bible, the Old and New Testament, therefore, is that elaborate work, which is more to be desired than any other. Besides many other advantages, this would tend more to reconciling parties and opinions in religion, by laying the foundation of one true interpretation of Scripture, and thus bringing them into one fold under one shepherd (a consummation by all Christians devoutly to be wished), than any other human expedient. In the execution of this great work, the books of the Hebrew Scriptures cannot be too minutely studied, too extensively collated, or too accurately compared ; whilst the Septuagint, which forms the safe and general guide to this knowledge, should never be neglected. It should always be diligently consulted, and attended to through the whole of the scriptural translation, as constituting the general model of the work. When the Old Testament has been thus consistently and uniformly translated, it will prepare the way for the execution of the sequel. The translation of the New

Testament should be engrafted on the Old, and thus form an integral part of the same whole, through the medium of the Septuagint.

As this is a work to be desired and encouraged by all Christians throughout the world, the learned of all countries should concur in its preparation, whilst in its execution, those of every communion should unite their labours. Too much learning cannot be employed, if seasoned with humility; nor too much sagacity, if tempered with sobriety; nor too much freedom of judgment, if exercised with discretion. In this important undertaking, all party opinion should be sunk in oblivion,—or, instead of one, we shall have as many Bibles, as there are religious sects. Certain rules should be enacted and invariably observed. If men be left at large to translate the Bible, with the same capricious taste and variety of genius, by which they translate other books, we shall have as great a diversity of texts, as translators, and the style will be as various as the genius of individuals. The Bible,—that one consistent body of light and truth,—will be

more varied in its meaning and metamorphosed in its form, than any other volume. This fatal variety will be augmented, in proportion to the number of its writers, the diversities of its language, the mysteries of its meaning, the complexity of its design, and the paramount superiority of its end.

We have thus attempted to delineate, in this chapter, a compendious sketch of the right use of reason in matters of religion, as a general outline of the study of divinity.

Far from superseding the exercise of reason, theology opens the largest, the richest, and the most diversified field for its cultivation, in which, all the powers and provinces of the understanding, the will, and the imagination are employed. But to prevent error, in this vast and various walk of science, which is more easy and more useful than to correct, it may be a general caution to mark distinctly the different offices of reason, as she advances from one stage to another, in rearing the edifice of the Christian faith.



1. The testimony of God revealed to man,—the leading principle of theology,—is contained in a book exhibiting a certain peculiar form of language. In tracing reason upwards, in the ascending scale, to that divine testimony (the reverse of the order pursued in the preceding pages), it would be our first duty to inquire into the history of that book—the authenticity of the Holy Scriptures<sup>67</sup>.

2. This book professes to have been written by men divinely gifted and inspired, consequently, infallible in what they wrote.—The second office of reason, therefore, is to inquire into the truth of this inspiration—the authority of the Holy Scriptures.

3. This book is found to contain a series of doctrinal truths, which are distinguished as *mysteries*, and these are asserted to be the immediate dictates of the Spirit of God. To verify this supernatural fact, a series of supernatural tests and evidences are inseparably connected with these mysteries, so that if the former be true, the latter must be true likewise. The third office of reason is, con-

<sup>67</sup> See page 55.

sequently, to examine these tests and evidences—the divinity of the Holy Scriptures.

4. This book was written and early translated in ancient languages, and has its meaning conveyed, and often couched and concealed, in particular styles and forms of writing. The fourth office is, to understand these ancient languages, and to unfold their peculiar styles and idioms,—the interpretation of the Holy Scriptures.

5. And, as this book was given for the use and advantage of all nations, it is the end and object of theological study, so to render it into different languages, that it may be rightly and properly understood by those who speak them.—In this office, consists the translation of the Holy Scriptures.

When these several offices are duly executed, the edifice of theology is complete, Reason resigns herself to Faith, which takes immediate possession of the soul, embracing with implicit and firm assent, the contents of this sacred volume. Its doctrines then become, as the first principles of its truth. They reject all direct attempt to

judge, compare, or account for them by human reasoning. They are not the *posita* of philosophers, but the *placita* of God<sup>67</sup>.

6. But though Reason may not *directly* intrude into the temple of Faith, which she hath thus erected, it is her sacred duty, as the handmaid of Religion, to attend this queen of science with all obeisance and devotion, to contemplate her excellence, to illustrate her doctrines, to confirm her precepts, to promote her interests, to behold her fair beauty, and to bring her children,—the arts and sciences,—to minister in her courts. And, as the moral precepts of reason are recognised in revelation, as the immediate will and command of God; it is her final and highest office to propose them to the will of men, with every advantage of accuracy and precision, seconded by all the powers of argument and persuasion—the ethics of the Holy Scriptures.

In these various offices of theological reasoning, which is different in the aggregate from every other intellectual process, a sound

<sup>67</sup> See Bacon De Augm. Scient. lib. ix.

understanding and a sincere heart will be found far more useful and propitious guides, than all the modes and figures of syllogistic logic<sup>68</sup>.

<sup>68</sup> On the question of a new translation of the Scriptures, there is still, of course, some difference of opinion ; but the editor believes, that the public are, on the whole, so well satisfied with our present translation for popular use, and feel so many perils attending any new version, that they are well content to put up with its imperfections, rather than encounter a host of unknown evils. The translations of Lowth will always be admired for their elegance, and those of Doddridge, Campbell, and Macknight are deservedly esteemed ; but Geddes has sunk almost to the level of Harwood, and the Unitarian version.

The general observations of Dr. Tatham, on scriptural translation, are eminently just and accurate ; but he has, perhaps, carried, to an extreme, his dread of introducing taste and elegance. In the poetical parts of Scripture, such as the Psalms or the book of Job, there is surely some scope for the exercise of genius and imagination in the translator. As an evidence of the force of his complaint of the want of uniformity, in our translation of the Old and New Testament, it may suffice to refer the student to 1 Peter, iv. 18, which is an exact quotation of Proverbs, xi. 31, in the LXX, but which passages in our translations convey not only different, but opposite meanings.—*Editor*.

## CHAP. VII.

## THEOLOGICAL TRUTH.

THUS the prize of theologic science cannot be won, without much labour in the race, and even when the prize of faith is won, and “we have the witness in ourselves,” though the truths of religion in their value, duration, and object transcend all other truth; yet are their evidences more complicate and various, than those of any other science. And thus faith is compelled to stoop from divine, to human testimony; and what is abstractedly the highest truth, seems often to human wisdom comparatively “foolishness.” Derived into the human understanding, through such a various and complex train of reasoning, when viewed in its mere logical proportions, it is not only different from all others, but secondary and inferior in force and evidence. Its

objects are not only removed from the apprehension of sense, but are many of them placed beyond the comprehension of intellect. Though its moral evidence be strong and convincing, that evidence is not alone sufficient to support its claims. The scenes, in which its external evidences were displayed to men, on which its historical authority mainly rests, have been removed for many ages. However divine and infallible in itself, the testimony of God is conveyed through the channel of human tradition, and left dependent on the fallible support of human testimony ; whilst the substance of this truth, as recorded and conveyed to us, becomes the theme of diverse and difficult interpretation. Thus by a useful monition to our present imperfections and our future hopes, the sublime contemplation of theology should convince the student, that this life does not admit of an entire survey of these heavenly phenomena ; that, in this sublunary path, we should walk by faith, not by sight, and that even the eye of faith, by which things are spiritually discerned, can now only view in part, and “ through a glass darkly ;” that



numberless truths are reposed in the Divine Mind, which remain for future ages to develop, and that, when divested of this mortal body, and removed from scenes material, to climates under a brighter sun, we may advance, by perpetual approaches towards Him, who, though now pavilioned in clouds and darkness, will then “be glorified in his saints, and admired in all that believe.”

The assent, by which this singular species of truth, so superior in intrinsic worth, yet so inferior in logical arrangement, is distinguished by the name of *Faith*. Though transcendent in its origin and its end, faith is humbled by the means through which it takes possession of the mind; and is, by that very circumstance, distinguished from every species of conviction or assent, which the mind entertains, in its natural process. It is thus, like its Divine Author and Finisher, “made perfect through suffering.”

Why, it may be asked, if this truth be of such universal and immense importance, does its omniscient Author, whose mercies are over all his works, keep it so much

concealed from men? Why are its doctrines so mysterious? Why are its evidences at so great a distance from our view, and so painful and laborious in the acquisition? Why is the written Word so obscure and concealed, couched in parabolical expression, and involved in symbols and emblematic figures? and why is the conviction, resulting from the whole of revelation, so much weaker and logically inferior to that of the other kinds of truth, which are so far less extensive in their use, and less important in their end? Other truths can only lead men, with comfort and advantage, through the present transitory life; this professes to open them a passage and ensure them a portion, in that future and better world which is permanent.—And why, rejoins the mathematician, is it not founded on principles as self-evident, why not as clearly and easily to be deduced, why not crowned with as strong and full conviction, as my demonstrations?—And the same questions may be asked respectively, by the patrons and professors of all other departments of learning. They may jointly demand—Why does this celestial knowledge, which flows immediately from

the centre of light and truth, derive from him such weak and clouded beams, as to shine on the human mind, through a denser and more complex medium, than any of the human arts and sciences<sup>1</sup>?

To these indefinite questions one general answer may suffice,—That truth, considered in its relation to the human mind, is of many and different kinds, each of which has its own proper nature, whereby it is adapted to the particular use and end for which it was designed: that this difference, in whatever it may consist, should not tend to the rejection of any, but that all, of whatever kind, are equally entitled to that reasonable assent of the human mind, for which they were designed, though not operating with equal degrees of evidence: that ethical truth should not be exploded, because it is not physical, nor physical because it is not mathematical: and that the uses and ends, which they are severally calculated to produce, are, by no means, in proportion to their strength and brightness: that, it is consequently incumbent on all reasonable men, instead of

<sup>1</sup> See Butler's Analogy, part ii. chap. 6.

prescribing the conditions, on which, truth is to be received, to embrace it with gratitude, on the terms, on which, it is given ; valuing it according to the measure of its utility ; and resolving its different phenomena and effects into the wisdom of Him who gave it,—whether that wisdom can be known or not, and without demanding, with daring and impious curiosity,—wherefore its Divine Creator made it what it is.

But, beside this general answer, a special reason may be assigned, from the end which theological truth has professedly in view. From this end, we may deduce an obvious argument, why this Divine species of truth is thus peculiarly constituted.

Assent to divine testimony is the first principle of theologic truth, and this assent is distinguished by the name of Faith. But future happiness, in the more immediate fruition of the Deity, exalted by his presence and crowned by his love, is the end of that faith, for the sake of which, this truth is to be embraced. Frequent and explicit are the declarations of Holy Scripture, that the “ pure in heart shall

see God<sup>2</sup>;" and that "without holiness no man shall see the Lord<sup>3</sup>." It is therefore necessary that this purity of heart, which is so indispensable to the end, should become an ingredient of the means, which are ordained to open the way and to lead men to it. In order, therefore, to give faith this purifying influence over the heart, the truth, which is its object, is withdrawn from the fuller and more immediate view of the understanding.

By this divine arrangement, an intermediate discipline is instituted, in which all the best affections of the heart are involuntarily developed, and all the moral virtues exercised, in the act of embracing, honouring, and obeying the truth. Thus faith obtains the sceptre of moral discipline, by which she trains her disciple to the capacity of enjoying that heaven to which she aspires. She enables him gradually to overcome the present world, and it is this victory which constitutes her triumph<sup>4</sup>. Hence the energy of Christian truth, since the essence of faith consists in bringing the hopes of the future world to

<sup>2</sup> Mal. v. 8.

<sup>3</sup> Heb. xii. 14.

<sup>4</sup> 1 John, v. 4.

predominate over the things of time and sense.

In this short probationary stage of being, men are only in the infancy of their existence ; and, to train them to that maturity of moral virtue, in which their manhood is to consist, they are appointed to “ walk by faith, and not by sight.” Throughout the whole of the religious dispensation, therefore, he is “ a God that hideth himself ;” and the search after God in the kingdom of Grace, is adapted by his wisdom to call into action every generous disposition and virtuous inclination of the heart, which is devoted to piety. The effort of bringing the first offering to the shrine of faith may be painful and difficult ; for the evil affections, which stand in the way, are first to be removed. By prayer and exercise and habit, however, it becomes not only easy but delightful ; till the pleasure which results, independent of the reward, will amply repay the labour. “ Godliness is profitable unto all things.”

In the appointment, therefore, of this preparatory discipline, so requisite to the end, we find an adequate solution of all the objec-



tions which can be raised to the difficulty and obscurity of theological truth. He, whose superabundant love undertook all that was requisite to be done in the reconciliation between God and man ; who had the supreme prerogative of “ knowing what is in man,” and who treated him, according to his nature, perceived the necessity of this discipline, and has adapted it to the conditions of the gospel. This purpose, we may infer, therefore, could not have been effected, had the truths of theology been different, or unfolded in any other way, or had the faith by which they are embraced, formed a different species of assent.

Were the evidences and objects of our faith on a level with those of sense, this moral discipline, so essential to the end in view, would have been destroyed, and many other ill effects would have ensued to mankind. Were they as full, and obvious, and easy to be evinced, as those of several other kinds of truth, the evidences of religion would force the conviction of the understanding, independently of the will, without eliciting

the exercise of those moral virtues, by which man is qualified for the practical duties of religion on earth, and becomes fitted for its future reward. Such evidence, by being too powerful, would leave a restraint on the voluntary faculties, and defeat the main end of religion, which consists in trial and moral discipline<sup>5</sup>. Resting on proof inviting no spontaneous desire or emotion of the mind, and requiring no application of industry or labour of discussion, by assenting to such truths, as are obvious of themselves or easy of admission, faith would not then be what it was designed. It would then be an easy and superficial accomplishment, in the exercise of which, though the understanding might be improved, the heart would have small concern;—it might be an intellectual, it could not be a moral virtue. It would call for no exercise of candour, humility, or patient inquiry; no earnest desire to learn and obey the will of God; no aspirations for the Divine presence; no humble, yet “earnest expectation of the creature, to be delivered from the burden of the flesh, into the glorious

<sup>5</sup> See Butler's Analogy, part i. chap. 4, 5.

liberty of the children of God." It could not be the condition of a religion, whose criterion is holiness, and which is commensurate to the wants and requirements of all mankind.

But, from the constitution of theologic truth, faith becomes a moral, rather than an intellectual virtue ; the voluntary offering of the heart, not the necessary result of the understanding. The evidences of religion are not so overpowering as to compel an unconditional assent. They are only made sufficient for the rational conviction of every candid and well-disposed inquirer, and for the religious conduct of every humble and willing mind. They are such, as are calculated to induce habits of seriousness and reflection, of virtuous diligence and anxious desire to find the truth, and to subjugate our passions and prejudices, to the probable evidence of moral conviction. And thus it is, that faith, being a moral virtue, becomes alike suitable to all, and that its reward is left equally open to their attainment.

To search and know the truth by which they are to be saved, is unquestionably the duty of all men. It is however practically known,

that, according to the economy of this world and the condition of human life, all do not enjoy equal opportunities, nor are all blest with equal abilities. As the end of faith is, however, equally designed for all, it is so arranged, that those who seek the truth with diligence and desire, with a humble and willing mind, and with a hope full of immortality, according to the advantages they enjoy, and make it, when found, the rule of their religious conduct, will be entitled to all its benefits. And the objects of faith, which we are commanded to embrace with implicit trust and confidence, on the authority of him "that beareth witness," are in general concealed from the most profound investigation and the most penetrating sagacity; so that, in the household of faith, the learned and the unlearned are eventually placed on the same level, and may jointly exclaim in humble adoration—"Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief<sup>6</sup>."

Thus faith is not so much to know, as

<sup>6</sup> "The doctrine of religion, as well moral as mystical, is not to be attained but by inspiration and revelation from God."—Bacon's *Advancement of Learning*, book ii.

to desire and embrace the truth. To all, whose minds are willing and well-disposed, the evidences of religion, after such a probationary and preparatory discipline, will be found abundantly sufficient, and its objects will be sufficiently clear, to lead to that salvation which is the end of faith. To all others, however superior and excellent their knowledge, they will prove totally insufficient, nay, the aggravations of guilt, and the means of condemnation.

Again, were these evidences as easy and obvious, as the common facts of common life, the truths of religion would be held by the generality in similar contempt, subject to that indignity and scorn attached to whatever is of easy acquisition and ordinary use. To the educated, they would not afford that extensive field for the exercise of reason, in which all the active virtues of the mind and imagination are occupied, and supported by the best affections and exertions of the will. Or, were the objects of faith revealed in all their glory, and the heavenly mansions displayed to view, all the powers of intellect would be lost in ecstatic

wonder. Instead of being engaged in those duties and occupations, necessary to our existence and accommodation below, the faculties of men would be abstracted from all those earthly objects and concerns, with which, they are connected. Instead of employing themselves in those duties, which are adapted to their probationary state, as inhabitants of this earth, and by which they may be prepared to become inhabitants of heaven, they would be led to undervalue and despise them, in the anticipation of that supreme and celestial state, without any capacities for its enjoyment.

Thus, whilst the assent, which accompanies the conviction of every other kind of truth, is solely a virtue of the understanding, constituting the wisdom which is human; faith is the wisdom which is properly divine. It is "first pure, then peaceable," penetrating the heart, and subduing its affections. This purity of heart, which can alone qualify men to see and enjoy their Maker in the intercourse of his love, forms the great object which religion invariably holds in view, and



which it every where promotes. The nature of its evidences, the sublimity of its doctrines, the excellence of its precepts, the perfection of its examples, its regenerating grace—every part of the Christian system has a direct tendency to improve the heart and to perfect moral excellence. The image of God, that celestial character, originally impressed on the human mind,—however injured and defaced, it is the business of religion to repair and restore, by this course of probationary discipline, to more than pristine beauty. And thus our faith corresponds to its real end and character—it is “the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen.”

Hence also arises the logical inferiority of theological truth, as less regular and symmetrical in its proportions, than the other kinds of evidence, which are cognate and connatural to human faculties. But that, it is in consequence of this scientific inferiority of theological truth, faith becomes the means of moral discipline, is strikingly apparent from the different dispensation of religious know-

ledge to men, in the different circumstances and ages of the world—to the ancient patriarchs, in respect of the remote objects of the faith, by which they were justified—to the apostles and more immediate witnesses of Christ—and to ourselves in these later times.

To men, placed in such different situations, religious truth has appeared with a very different aspect, as viewed from different positions. Yet notwithstanding this difference, the whole religious economy is so wonderfully constructed, that the faith, by which it is embraced, and by which all are to be justified, is in all the self-same virtue, interesting the will whilst engaging the intellect, and addressed to the heart even still more directly than to the understanding<sup>6</sup>.

1. Though the evidences of a supernatural interposition were dispensed with a liberal hand through the patriarchal age, the celestial light shone upon them as in a dark and distant place. The objects of their faith could be seen only through an indis-

<sup>6</sup> Butler's Analogy, part ii. chap. 5, 6.

tinged and clouded atmosphere. Save the light which regulated their moral conduct, all their religious instruction was involved in figurative and enigmatical predictions, and rendered inaccessible, in its most important sense, to the apprehension even of those, through whose lips it came. Relying on a promise originally delivered in obscure and general terms, and exhibited in future generations, under such types and figurative representations, as were only “shadows of better things to come<sup>7</sup> ;” their faith was founded on that trust in God, which resulted from piety and virtue. Under this dark and dubious cloud, the holy men of old were placed, which nothing but the rising of the Sun of Righteousness could effectually dispel after the lapse of many ages. Their faith was indeed “the substance of a future hope,” deriving that excellent quality by which it became triumphant, from the obedience and pious resignation, by which it was accompanied<sup>8</sup>. Although, to their dim and imperfect vision, “clouds and darkness

<sup>7</sup> Col. ii. 17. Heb. viii. 5 ; x. 1.

<sup>8</sup> Heb. xi.

were round about him," they still rested in the confident assurance, which their faith and patience had supplied, that "righteousness and judgment were the habitation of his seat."

Prophecy was the principal channel of religious instruction in these early ages. This was delivered in a mysterious and enigmatical form, that it might afford exercise to the mental faculties and moral dispositions of the willing and well-disposed; and that, whilst it was calculated to be the test of truth, it might also be the reward of virtue. Of this sublime intention of the Inspirer, we have a full and unequivocal assurance in the angel's reply to the prophet Daniel, who was kept in ignorance of the very predictions he was commissioned to pronounce.—"And I heard," said the prophet, "but I understood not: then said I, O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things? And he said, Go thy way, Daniel; for the words are closed up and sealed to the time of the end. Many shall be purified and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly; none of the

wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand<sup>9</sup>.”

The faith of Abraham stands forward as a prominent example, and will ever remain a splendid monument of his piety. Dark in its evidence and distant in its object, it was sanctified by his ready and unreserved obedience to the will of God ; and hence it was “ accounted to him for righteousness.” By virtue of such a faith, he was denominated “ The Righteous,” and constituted “ The Father of the Faithful,” the sire of the people of God in all ages, who believe and obey after his example, who, in participation of his eternal reward, will be “ blest with faithful Abraham<sup>10</sup>.” As an immediate recompense for that singular and magnanimous instance of faith, in stretching his son on the altar, the Almighty indulged the aged patriarch, in this devoted act, with an indirect and distant view of that future day, when the entire mystery of his faith should be un-

<sup>9</sup> Dan. xii. 8, 9, 10.

See this argument powerfully and beautifully expanded by Davison, in his Discourses on Prophecy.—*Editor*.

<sup>10</sup> Gal. iii.

folded in the personal sacrifice of his Son upon the cross<sup>11</sup>. On the part of Abraham, as this was the most signal example of obedience ; so, on the part of God, this was a signal example of the language of prophetic action. This emblematic vision was interpreted by Christ himself, in that emphatic declaration, by which the Jews were so much offended, and by which commentators have been so much confounded—"Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day,—he saw it, and was glad<sup>12</sup>."

Had the information and conviction of the understanding been the sole, or indeed the main object, in the intention of the Inspirer in these early ages ; instead of delivering this religious instruction in such a dark and mysterious form, he could have adopted some mode of supernatural communication more immediate and direct. But He, who had resolved by his immutable attributes, that, "without holiness no man should see him," had another and greater end in view. Religious instruction was communicated in

<sup>11</sup> Gen. xxii.

<sup>12</sup> John, viii. 56.



such a mode and with such qualifications, as to excite the desires, exercise the industry, and improve the virtue of these venerable men. And thus the first and best offering which they made to Heaven, was the voluntary offering of the heart.

Such was the sanctifying nature of that faith, by which “the elders obtained a good report,” anticipating its object amidst dark and distant prospects, full of pious affection, earnest desire, and holy trust. After enumerating an illustrious phalanx of saints and martyrs, who were justified by such faith, the apostle has assigned the reason why they were withheld from the enjoyment of the promise. It is most encouraging to the efforts, desires, and hopes of the partakers of the same faith, in all ages since it was fulfilled.—“God having provided some better thing for us; that they, without us, should not be made perfect<sup>13</sup> :”—that the whole family and household of the faithful, in every age, as the spiritual children of Abraham, should be justified together.

<sup>13</sup> Heb. xi. 40.

2. The circumstances and situation of events at the coming of Christ, and his own conduct and that of his apostles in preaching the gospel, will afford us still more ample illustrations of the true nature of theologic faith.

His divine commission was opened by an illustrious herald, specially sent to prepare the way for his reception, by preaching "the baptism of repentance," or the internal purgation of the heart, as the prelude to that external baptism, which is its emblem, and which, therefore, he ordained to be the initiatory sacrament of his religion.

On assuming the prophetic character, he first addressed himself to those learned Jews, who, from their superiority of station and the ritual offices which they held, should have been prepared to receive him, as the Messiah, whether by hearts purified according to the observance of their law, or by the application of prophecies fulfilled in him, to which it was their duty to attend. Devoid, however, of the former qualification, they became totally blind to the second. In them was the

prophecy fulfilled—"None of the wicked shall understand"<sup>14</sup>. By a perversion of judgment the most obstinate and depraved, they were led to misinterpret the obvious meaning of their prophets: and when he displayed before their eyes the most stupendous miracles, "their hearts being hardened"<sup>15</sup> through the deceitfulness of sin," their understandings revolted against this combination of external and internal evidence<sup>16</sup>. Their faith was blasted by an obduracy of mind, the result of many gross and habitual vices, particularly the predominance of pride, and that of the most inveterate species—the pride of knowledge. Devoid of that charity which alone could edify, their knowledge was vain and unprincipled. The vices of the heart perverted the light of the understanding. "Therefore," saith the beloved apostle, "they could not believe."—This total perversion of the faculties of the human mind, in rejecting his gospel, was an event so singular and important, as to become the subject of a signal prophecy. It was thus transformed into

<sup>14</sup> Dan. xii. 10.<sup>15</sup> John, xii. 40.<sup>16</sup> John, xii. 37, 38.

an evidence of the very truth which it had rejected:—"That the saying of Esaias might be fulfilled,—He hath blinded their eyes and hardened their heart, that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them<sup>17</sup>."

Habitual sincerity of heart was the first object of our Lord's search, and the sole subject of his improvement. To prove whether their faith could endure a foundation based on humility, he delivered his doctrines to the Scribes and Pharisees, under the veil of parables<sup>18</sup>, that he might rouse their voluntary faculties, and appeal to their moral convictions. Had he delivered them in open terms, their overwhelming energy, supported by the miracles with which they were accompanied, would have subdued their resistance, and they would have been converted and healed by a compulsive power, in opposition to their will,—a contradiction to the whole intent of his religion. But by couching

<sup>17</sup> John, xii. 40. See Rom. x. 21.

<sup>18</sup> Matt. xiii. and Mark iv.

them under parables, he held them in reserve, that they might be still amenable to their own unrighteous prejudices,—“that seeing they might see, and not perceive, and hearing they might hear, and not understand<sup>19</sup>.”

From these unpromising candidates of a holy faith, he turned his attention to others of an opposite description, with this severe and pointed sentence,—“For judgment, am I come into the world, that they who see not, might see; and they who see, might be made blind<sup>20</sup>.” Such were those humble fishermen, who were possessed of sincerity, but who had no pretension to great intellectual attainments. In these, he fulfilled another prophecy, by “being found of them who sought him not, and being made manifest to them, who asked not after him<sup>21</sup>.” Their minds, though uninformed, were candid; though ignorant, unprejudiced; though weak, were well-disposed. Possessed, in a sufficient degree, of the first and more essential qualification,—docility and simplicity of heart,—they became the proper subjects of a king-

<sup>19</sup> Mark, iv. 12.

<sup>20</sup> John, ix. 39.

<sup>21</sup> Rom. x. 20.

dom, to be founded and administered in righteousness: whilst, under the care and discipline of such a master, they would speedily acquire the second,—their understandings enlarged and their faculties strengthened. From his miracles, they acknowledged, with ingenuous candour, his divine authority. By showing themselves ready to obey, and willing to be instructed, they evinced the necessary qualifications to become his disciples.—“He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, I will love him, and will manifest myself to him<sup>22</sup>.” If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God<sup>23</sup>.”

But however open their hearts and willing to obey, their minds were infirm and tender: he therefore instructed them with the utmost caution, lest, by alarming their fears, he should subvert or check those principles, which were to be of voluntary growth, insensibly improving their hearts and invigorating their understandings. He did not unfold to them, at once, the mysteries

<sup>22</sup> John, xiv. 21.

<sup>23</sup> John, vii. 17.



of his kingdom, unable, as they were, to understand such deep, or to endure such solemn truths. He taught them in parables to excite in them a voluntary curiosity and desire to be informed, and at the same time, to conceal from them, till they were strengthened and prepared for its reception, the awful events of his religion. When they had sufficiently employed their best intellectual faculties in the endeavour to discover their import, he explained to them in private, what he had before delivered in public, to the Scribes and Pharisees, as “they were able to bear it<sup>24</sup>.” On their inquiring why he taught under this parabolical disguise, and not openly, to encourage them to advance from grace to grace, he honoured them, mean as they were in their own esteem, above their haughty teachers. “To *you*, it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven; but to *them* in parables<sup>25</sup>.” He thus stigmatized the obstinacy, punished the vices, and confounded the pride of the Scribes and Pharisees. And to illustrate this important position of the pro-

<sup>24</sup> Mark, iv. 33.

<sup>25</sup> Matt. xiii. 13, 14.

gressive discipline and voluntary establishment of his kingdom in the heart, he delivered his two expressive parables—"the Sower"<sup>26</sup>, and—"the Talents"<sup>27</sup>.

After the disciples were sufficiently disciplined and confirmed, he commissioned them to preach the kingdom of God, with power, and "appointed seventy others to go before his face into every city and place whither he himself should come"<sup>28</sup>. When these humble messengers told him, on their return, of their success in preaching the gospel and the progress they had made in faith,—“in that hour Jesus, rejoiced in spirit and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them unto babes : even so, O Father ; for so it seemeth good in thy sight"<sup>29</sup>.

Doubtless he could have opened their understandings instantaneously, and have filled them with intuitive knowledge ; but,

<sup>26</sup> Matt. xiii. 3—23, and Luke, viii. 4—15.

<sup>27</sup> Matt. xxv. 14—30, and Luke, xix. 11—27.

<sup>28</sup> Luke, x. 1.

<sup>29</sup> Luke, x. 21.

“knowing what is in man, and whereof he is made,” he treated them as rational and accountable beings, leaving their minds to their voluntary actions, to search after truth, advance in goodness, and grow in grace. As they improved in faith, he increased their knowledge. The improvement of the intellect, without the heart, was no qualification of a religion which is holy and undefiled. One of their number, failing in this moral improvement, so indispensable to a sound and saving faith, after all the wonders he had seen, and the divine instructions he had received, fell an unhappy victim to perverted privileges. Even the eleven, who continued faithful, were suffered for the same moral probation, to remain in ignorance of the true nature of his spiritual kingdom, till after his resurrection<sup>30</sup>. Seasoned and prepared, however, by a long course of severe and trying discipline, for its full reception, at length he poured on them his Holy Spirit, to open their understandings, and lead them into all revealed truth.

<sup>30</sup> Matt. xx. 21, and Acts, i. 6.

Such was that discipline by which the apostles were trained, through scenes of darkness gradually dispelled, in a virtuous and holy faith, by the hand of Christ himself. This example of their Divine Master they followed in their conduct towards others, observing, on all occasions, the great rule of faith which he had delivered—"Whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance; but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that which he hath<sup>31</sup>."

3. Whether it be the age of the patriarch, of the apostle, or the modern believer;—this faith is essentially uniform and permanent. As there "is one Lord, and one baptism, so there is one faith<sup>32</sup>," which is the same essential virtue in all ages, demanding the same joint qualification of the heart and understanding.

Before the advent of Christ, "faith was

<sup>31</sup> Matt. xiii. 12, and xxv. 29. Luke, xviii. 26.

<sup>32</sup> Eph. iv. 5.

the substance of things hoped for,"—brought into the mind by anticipation: and, since his final departure and the supernatural operation of the Holy Spirit, it is "the evidence of things not seen,"—brought into the mind by retrospection<sup>33</sup>. It is evermore the glory of our religion, that it constitutes a willing, as well as a reasonable service. The situation and circumstances, under which we are placed, in these remote times, with regard to its truth and evidence, still render necessary the same honest endeavour and voluntary exertion. They still arouse every affection of the mind, in the amiable search and pursuit of theologic truth; and still constitute our faith the same comprehensive and exalted virtue.

These sublime and unfathomable mysteries are the truths of our religion, to be firmly embraced on the sole authority of the testimony of God, though the evidences of that testimony to us are distant and indirect. The road to these evidences is long and laborious, and numerous difficulties

<sup>33</sup> Heb. ii. 1.

and obstructions intervene, to give exertion to the moral, as well as to the intellectual powers, that the student may improve in grace, as he improves in knowledge. In this elaborate inquiry, his industry is excited, his desires kindled, his love inflamed. Whether we view him, travelling through the annals of civil and ecclesiastical history, to prove the authenticity of the sacred code ; or regard him as employed, in the painful task, of comparing ancient manuscripts, copies, editions, and translations, for the purpose of establishing an uncorrupt text ; whether he is engaged in collecting the evidences of Christianity, to deduce the immortal argument from the whole, or in interpreting and translating different parts of the Holy Scriptures ; we may behold him traversing these regions of various learning, with the heart throbbing with desire, and the hope full of immortality. However deep his erudition, or indefatigable his industry, his attention and perseverance will prove unequal to the task, unless animated by the cause which leads him onwards. Thus disciplined in faith, whilst advancing



in knowledge, and encouraged by the example of those devoted men, who, in every age, have trod the same learned and laborious walk, and are gone before him to receive the reward of their labours,—the very same hopes, by which, they were animated will enable him to persevere : and, whilst looking up to them with gratitude and veneration for their useful labours, he will attribute their success, not less to their sincerity and simplicity of heart, than to the strength and vigour of their understandings.

But, it forms the chief glory of our faith, that, if turning our eye from the theological student to the humble believer, who, employed in any of the honest occupations of social life, reads his Bible, or hears it read ;—who “ thinks of the Lord, with a good heart, and, in simplicity of heart, seeks him ;—He will be found of them that tempt him not, and sheweth himself to such, as do not distrust him<sup>34</sup>.” It is the peculiar glory of our faith, that it is adapted to all, accommodated to the use, and intended for the benefit of

<sup>34</sup> Wisd. i. 1, 2.

every class and description ; that he, who breathes, with an ardent desire, after the prize of his Christian calling, however ignorant and unlettered, if his heart be sincere, and he earnestly prays for Divine assistance, will be accepted “ according to what he hath, and not according to what he hath not<sup>35</sup>. ” — “ There is no respect of persons. ”

Since the inhabitants of all ages and nations could not enjoy the immediate evidence of eye-witnesses, let it then be our privilege, to rest our faith with firmness, on the testimony of the first believers, in the consoling hope, that the greater diligence, assiduity, and confidence, we exert in the exercise of faith, the more abundant will be our reward. — “ Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed : blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed<sup>36</sup>. ” — When those unhappy multitudes, who, beholding the miracles of Jesus, rejected his doctrines, and ascribed his works to Beelzebub, shall look back in vain on the age of the Messias—should

<sup>35</sup> 2 Cor. viii. 12.

<sup>36</sup> John, xx. 29.

we, in these remote ages, repose our faith, with confidence, on the testimony of our predecessors, this difference will doubtless hereafter redound to their misfortune, and to our advantage.—“We are kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time. Wherein we greatly rejoice,—that the trial of our faith, being much more precious than of gold which perisheth, though it be tried with fire, may be found unto praise, honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ; whom, having not seen, we love; in whom, though now we see him not, yet believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory; receiving the end of our faith,—the salvation of our souls<sup>37</sup>.”

Thus in every age of the world, the Christian religion is a school of moral discipline, in which, “Wisdom is justified of all her children<sup>38</sup>.” “None of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand<sup>39</sup>.”—Had its truths and evidences been brought to

<sup>37</sup> 1 Pet. i. 5—9.

<sup>38</sup> See Butler's Analogy, part i. chap. 5, and part ii. chap. 6.

<sup>39</sup> Dan. xii. 10.

shine on the understanding, with that full glow of light and demonstrative conviction, which some have ignorantly required ; they might have forced from the wicked his hard and impenitent heart, and rendered it possible to be a Christian, against the freedom of the will,—a subversion both of the end of religion and the nature of man. He who “ knows whereof we are made,” hath dealt with his moral agents, in a way more suitable to our condition, and to the honour of his own government ; affording us such a degree of light, as, whilst it gives exercise to liberty and candour, is fully competent to convince the willing and well-disposed ; but which does not shine, with such absolute and irresistible force, as to illumine those, who “ love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil<sup>40</sup>.”

Thus from the nature of theological truth, it becomes the privilege of faith to be the greatest of virtues, comprehending all moral and intellectual good, and forming that ex-

<sup>40</sup> John, iii. 19.

alted union, in which, all the virtues of the heart and understanding combine. It is that inviolable bond, in which, truth and charity meet together in that wisdom<sup>41</sup> which alone is from above ;—" which is first pure,"—subduing the affections ; and " then perfect,"—excelling all other knowledge. This is the faith which, in every age, is the test of true religion. However varied in degree by circumstance or situation, it is the same essential quality in all—the voluntary offspring of the heart, rather than the necessary result of the intellect.

Thus pure in her origin, progressive in her increase, and perfect in her end, let it reflect no dishonour on this Wisdom, that " she can be justified only of her children," nor cast discredit on that faith, by which she is entertained, that the names of some men of brilliant parts and superior endowments are not enrolled under her banners. It is not, that they reject and dishonour her ; it is rather, she who rejects and dishonours them. Either the

<sup>41</sup> See vol. i. sect. 1, p. 3.

cold and evil spirit of unbelief hath chilled the heart, or their moral digestion is so vitiated and depraved, that it turns the most wholesome food into deadly poison. In them is fulfilled the denunciation of our Lord—"If thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If the light which is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness"<sup>42</sup>! Whilst we admire their talents and emulate their learning, we look up with pity to these splendid monuments of human folly, as our Lord surveyed with tears the temple of Jerusalem—that superb edifice erected for the service of the living God, and once worthy of his abode,—then desecrated and profaned, and devoted to destruction.

Whether Deist, or Freethinker, Minute philosopher, or unbeliever of whatsoever name, however inveterate be the prejudice, or abandoned the habits, under which, you labour, we can trust you with that searching question, either in respect to Christ or his religion, which Jesus addressed to his cotemporaries,—“Which of you convinceth me of sin?”—

<sup>42</sup> Matt. vi. 23.



Which of you can impeach the morality of the gospel? One advantage you must confess that we enjoy over you, in the great utility of its precepts and examples, which contribute so much to the happiness and security of social life. To this advantage, resulting from the “charity” of the gospel, which we know “will never fail,” we can add another of equal, or superior moment to our present happiness, derived from our “hope in believing,” which throws a beam of perpetual comfort over the mind. This would cheer and enliven every scene of life, even were our faith a dream, from which, when passed into the sleep of death, we were never to awake. This virtuous, this happy dream, would soften all our cares, alleviate all our pains, animate all our joys, whilst journeying through this vale of tears and sorrows. Permit us, then, to look up to the divine founder of that faith, with affections of gratitude and love; or if you will not acknowledge this founder, suffer us to offer thanks to the God of nature and providence for so great a blessing.—But some of you deny the being of God, and others his providence, convinced the admis-

sion of these will too powerfully imply the rest. Should you deny us these solid foundations of trust and comfort, permit us, at least, to congratulate our good fortune on the many and signal advantages, which we enjoy over you, by embracing the gospel, even in this deplorable world of change.—But consider, seriously consider, if what you so much deride, should eventually prove no dream—how superabundant will be our joy and consolation, how dreadful your regret and condemnation!

But “thanks be to God who hath given us” not only the advantage, but “the victory,” over you and the world—even the victory of our “faith,” “through our Lord Jesus Christ.” This is, indeed, no dream—it is a virtuous, pious, and reasonable conviction, built on substantial grounds, and to be crowned with sure enjoyment. The truths which it embraces are so divinely authorized; the evidences by which they are attested so strongly authenticated; they are accompanied by so many concurrent circumstances and credible qualifications—the personal knowledge, the honesty, the number, the

consistency, of the witnesses—men who had neither interest nor ability to forge such an extraordinary and unique plot, in the very scene, and almost at the time of action, when all had the immediate power to disprove it;—they are transmitted through so many different and opposite channels, and attested by so many collateral authorities, as to raise in every rational and candid mind a conviction, though not so overwhelming, yet quite as satisfactory, as the strongest evidence. And thus, “if the gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost; in whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them<sup>44</sup>.”

The prejudice of habit, the pride of science, or the impertinence of curiosity, may render some men dissatisfied, unless they can climb the confines of demonstration, for the proof of every kind of truth. We esteem it, on the contrary, not only the privilege, but the honour of every fair and rational in-

<sup>44</sup> 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4.

quirer, willingly to embrace and thankfully to acquiesce in such evidence and grounds of assent, as are sufficient ; more particularly, in such, as are naturally adapted to the kind of truth in question, and accommodated to the nature of the subject<sup>45</sup>. Better and fairer evidence of truth can in no case be required ; and with such, the Christian religion is abundantly supplied. God hath revealed himself, as he thought best for his own glory and our good ; and, if ye cannot believe him, because he has not given you exactly that degree of light, which your own fancy may suggest, but of which things do not admit—" he will not be mocked," ye must take the consequences on yourselves. The only assistance which we can give you, is to pray, that " He who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, may shine in your hearts, to give you the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ<sup>46</sup>."

" The kingdom of God is within you<sup>47</sup>," implying that it had its origin in the heart,—

<sup>45</sup> Hurd's Serm. vol. vi.    <sup>46</sup> 2 Cor. iv. 6.    <sup>47</sup> Luke, xvii. 21.

was the answer of our Lord to the Jews' inquiry, when his kingdom should appear. To represent this fundamental truth more sensibly to his disciples, "Jesus took a child and set him in the midst, and said, Unless ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." And, still further to illustrate it, he employs the parables of the Seed<sup>48</sup>, and the Grain of mustard<sup>49</sup>. By the former, he intimates, that at first it is small, and that its increase will depend upon the goodness of the soil, which is to be prepared and cleansed from the tares of vice; and that, in such a soil, it will make gradual advances from one stage to another, producing, "first, the blade, next the stem, then the ear, and, lastly, the full corn in the ear<sup>50</sup>." By the latter, he signifies, that, however small at first, it will finally become the great and reigning principle of the human mind. Thus "the path of the just," in the courts and offices of religion, "is as a shining light; which," by perpetual increase of faith, and

<sup>48</sup> Matt. xiii. 3, &c.<sup>49</sup> Matt. xiii. 31.<sup>50</sup> Mark, iv. 28.

constant supply of grace, “shineth more and more unto the perfect day<sup>51</sup>.”

For the admission, as well as enjoyment of the truths of a religion, which is thus pure and undefiled, the requisite qualification is the purity and renovation of heart, expressed in Scripture, by the figure of being “born again” or “from above.” Accordingly, the great apostle of the Gentiles admonishes the Ephesians, “to put on the new man, which, after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness<sup>52</sup> ;” and he exhorts the Roman converts, “not to be conformed to this world, but to be transformed in the renewing of their mind, that they may be able to prove what is the good, and acceptable, and perfect work of God<sup>53</sup>.”

In consecrating his labour at the temple of religion, whilst he cultivates its truth with his understanding, let the student of theology nourish charity in his heart, as the first and most essential ingredient of a sound and saving faith; frequently meditating on the solemn admonition of the last great prophet—“He

<sup>51</sup> Prov. iv. 18.

<sup>52</sup> Eph. iv. 24.

<sup>53</sup> Rom. xii. 2.



that is unjust, let him be unjust still : he that is filthy, let him be filthy still : he that is righteous, let him be righteous still : he that is holy, let him be holy still <sup>54</sup>."

From this logical view of the province of theology, in its principle, its reasoning, and its truth, the student in divinity will entertain a profound sense of the dignity, as well as difficulty of that science, which leaves behind all terrestrial things, and opens our prospect to future and unearthly scenes. With that humility, which becomes his present state, he will feel himself to be only in the cradle of his existence, and that his knowledge is proportioned to the immaturity of his age. In respect of the manhood of his being, he now only thinks and understands as a child ; and in this school of terrestrial discipline, in which, he is training for immortality, " he walks by faith and not by sight." He will acknowledge, that this life does not admit of any adequate view of things celestial, and that even the eye of faith, by which

<sup>54</sup> Rev. xxii. 11.

they are spiritually discerned, can only “see them imperfectly and in part, and as through a glass darkly.” He will be convinced, there are innumerable and ineffable truths reposed in the divine intellect, beyond the present comprehension of our faculties : whence will spring a lively hope, that in the future stages of his existence, he may be admitted to their knowledge and enjoyment. Divested of this mortal body, and removed from this material system, he will be transplanted into a purer clime, under the influence of a brighter sun, and advance by perpetual approaches towards Him, who, though now enshrined in clouds and darkness, will then reveal himself, as “THE GOD OF TRUTH<sup>55</sup>,” “to be admired of all that believe”—“when he shall behold his presence in righteousness, and awaking up after his likeness, shall be satisfied with it<sup>56</sup>.”

<sup>55</sup> Ὁ ΘΕΟΣ ΤΗΣ ἈΛΗΘΕΙΑΣ.—Ps. xxxi. 5. Ὁ ἀληθινός.—Rev. iii. 7 ; vi. 10. Τάδε λέγει ὁ Ἀμὴν, ὁ μάρτυς ὁ πιστὸς καὶ ἀληθινός.—Rev. iii. 14. Ἡ ἀλήθεια τῇ Κυρίῳ μένει εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα.—Ps. cxvi. 2. Deus, Veritas.—Jer. x. 10. *Montanus*, literally from the Hebrew. Conf. Isaiah, lxxv. 16. John, xiv. 6.—*Editor*.

<sup>56</sup> Ps. xvii. 15.

## CHAP. VIII.

GENERAL RECAPITULATION, AND SKETCH  
OF THE FUTURE PLAN.

**M**ETHINKS, I am in the situation of one, who has been travelling over a level, but fertile country. When he first set out, the place of his destination appeared at no great distance ; and the objects to be noticed in the way seemed neither so many nor so important, but that he could view them, with sufficient attention for the purpose of his journey, and arrive at the end, in a given time. As he advanced, he found the prospect opening on every side, the objects increasing in number and swelling in magnitude, as the eye surveyed them ; insomuch that, though he made no excursion from the road, he found himself employed and detained on his journey much longer than he expected.—Thus the plan, which I hoped to execute, in some

measure, in the course of ten or twelve lectures, is not half completed : and though I have endeavoured to treat the important topics of various disquisition, as they occurred, with all the conciseness in my power, we are arrived only at the point, from which I had intended to take my general survey.

This may perhaps prove an alarm to the future patience of my hearers ; it is, I am sure, a present disappointment to myself. But, before we start afresh (should I find opportunity or encouragement to proceed, by overcoming that indolence, which is a vice I feel deeply rooted in my constitution), it may be proper to take a general view of the ground over which we have passed, by way of adjusting our present accounts, and also to give my reader a short sketch of the country, through which, at some future period, we may travel together : unless some individual, better qualified, should undertake the task ;—“ *et gaudebo certe, si alii, quod nos inchoavimus, melioribus ipsi auspiciis et necessariis ad tantum opus præsiidiis instructiores perfecerint*<sup>1</sup>.”

<sup>1</sup> Casaubon, p. 406.

The delineation of Wisdom, with which we commenced these philosophical researches, portrayed that universal virtue of the heart and understanding, which comprehends all moral and intellectual good; and which we accordingly divided into two collateral branches, truth and charity—the basis and summit of all things. Truth is of the nature and essence of God, incapable of a verbal definition, but to be illustrated by the similitude of light. From the divine mind, it becomes, by communication, an attribute of the human, and is proportioned to the mind in which it exists. In the divine, it is universal, intuitive, permanent, and infallible. In the human, it is partial, progressive, various, and hidden, to be sought by virtuous and assiduous investigation. In both, it is immutable<sup>2</sup>.

In the investigation of truth, the philosophy of mind, of which it is an attribute, is the first in natural order, though the last in the course of human study, and therefore called *metaphysics*. This is a science which, in its just

<sup>2</sup> Introduction, sect. i.

and proper cultivation, is of great importance, as it lays the philosophical foundation and distinction of all other sciences ; distributing the human mind into three general provinces, the theoretic, the practic, and the poetic, in reference to the intellect, the will, and the imagination ; and classing universal truth under these different provinces, as it separates into special relations, according to the operation of these different faculties on their respective internal or external objects<sup>3</sup>.

All truth, to whatever province it pertains, is deduced from principles, as they exist in the nature and constitution of things, which are of two general kinds, primary and secondary. The primary are the evidence of external sense, the evidence of internal sense, and the evidence of memory, &c. The secondary are axioms, or universal propositions, derived from the former by a process of reason. These two species of principles divide all direct reasoning into two kinds or methods<sup>4</sup>.

Truths are deduced from principles, by an

<sup>3</sup> Sect. ii.

<sup>4</sup> Sect. iii..



act of reason, their common instrument, consisting of perception and judgment, acting by comparison. It is the office of reason to judge of evidence, to form and apply axioms, and to trace analogies. According to the principles on which it operates, reasoning is divided into different methods. The first is the inductive, which commences with particulars, derived from the primary principles. It compares many of them together by simple acts, and by such comparisons, extracts general laws, respecting the powers, properties, and relations of things; abstracting, by an experimental process, general ideas, or formal causes. By affirming or denying a genus of a species, or an accident of a substance, through all the stages of the ascending process, it forms general conclusions; which, if logically conducted, are axioms, ranged one above another, till they terminate in universals. When axioms, or secondary principles, are thus formed, the method is the reverse, and becomes syllogistic, which applies these general axioms to the proof of less general or particular truths; predicating a genus of a species or individual,

in a descending scale ; and proceeding in double or complex comparisons, by the help of a third, or middle term. To these two, which are direct, is added the analogic, which is indirect and subservient to them. Analogy compares things already known by whatever way, with those which are not known, and, from their similitude, infers the truth of the latter. This is a method of vast utility and extent, and supplemental to both the former. These three methods are essentially different, and constitute severally the whole business of logic, as an instrumental art, or rather, as the particular method of each<sup>5</sup>.

Universal truth assumes a special form, according to the specific nature of its different means, which constitute those various substances and subjects of mind and body, from which its particular principles are supplied. According to these particular principles, and the method of reasoning adapted to them, truth separates into particular kinds, possessed of different degrees of evidence and convic-

<sup>5</sup> Sect. iv.

tion. The general rule, by which reason should conduct her operations in each, is this—to investigate its proper principles, to pursue them in the proper method, and embrace its proper truth with a just and due assent<sup>6</sup>.

To apply this general rule to the different branches of science, constitutes the first part of my plan; which, by exhibiting a parallel of their principles, their reasoning, and their truths, forms a general chart of their distinct and separate provinces, and subdivisions; whilst, by placing them in juxtaposition and by their comparative survey, it furnishes a general scale, by which the proper nature and weight of the truth of each may be respectively adjusted<sup>7</sup>.

Every thing which is the subject of human knowledge, belongs either to mind or body. Metaphysic is the universal science, logic the universal art;—these treat more immediately of the former. Physics belong to the latter. Between these, lies a science, which relates to and partakes of both, having its subject derived from the sensible qualities of body,

<sup>6</sup> Sect. v.

<sup>7</sup> Sect. vi.

but abstracted by an act of mind. These are the *mathematics*; comprehending quantity continuous and discrete, or magnitude and multitude, and accordingly separating into geometry and arithmetic. The evidence of the external senses, exercised on bodies in respect to quantity (from which all other attributes are abstracted with so much ease, as to supersede the necessity of induction), is the primary principle of mathematical science. These begin with general ideas, capable of clear and adequate definition, of being exhibited to the eye by diagrams and signs; being simple modes, distinct from all other ideas, absolute and unchangeable in themselves, and to be exactly measured and ascertained. These ideas being compared, form a few general propositions which are axioms or secondary principles. They compel conviction from a single act of judgment, and are, therefore, self-evident, though not intuitive. On account of these axioms, mathematical reasoning is perfectly syllogistic<sup>8</sup>, reducing

<sup>8</sup> Those who wish to be ocularly convinced of this assertion, may consult the Euclid of Herlinus (Argent. 1566), in which the first six books are laboriously converted into syl-

general truths under more general, till they terminate in the most general. These conclusions, or demonstrated theorems, may be applied, in the same way, to the proof of others almost *ad infinitum*. The truths resulting from such a process are purely scientific, carrying the most absolute and irresistible conviction<sup>9</sup>. In these, the Will has no concern; they belong to the Intellect.

The science of Physics, or natural philosophy, investigates the qualities of things individual and particular, the properties and operations of natural body. The evidence of the external senses forms the primary principle of physics, aided by experiment, and philosophical observation. Its method of reasoning, from a number of experiments and observations to general causes, or secondary principles, is purely and exclusively inductive, but is extended by ana-

logisms. Barrow, in his *Lectiones Mathematicæ*, p. 106, has turned the first proposition into enthymemes. See also Clavius's Euclid, lib. i. prop. 1.—“It would have been difficult,” observes Dugald Stewart (vol. ii. p. 260), “to devise a more effectual expedient for exposing to the meanest understanding the futility of the syllogistic theory.”—*Editor*.

<sup>9</sup> Part i. chap. 1.

logy. When these secondary principles, or laws of physics, have been thus established, they will account for the truth of particulars by superinduction, without any aid of syllogism; but mathematics apply, with great effect, to those physical forms, which are capable of mensuration. As experiments do not penetrate into the essence of things, but only inform the senses of apparent qualities or effects, as the induction is partial and confined, and the conclusions particular; physical truth is inferior in rank to mathematical, and is not strictly demonstrative. But though not admitting demonstration, it forms a most useful and interesting part of science<sup>10</sup>.

After Physics, Metaphysics, or the philosophy of mind, may be most usefully and successfully cultivated. Consciousness is their primary principle, assisted by observations on the intellectual and moral faculties. Their method of reasoning, from a number of such observations accurately made, is inductive, assisted by analogy, to form their secondary or general principles. This method

<sup>10</sup> Part i. chap. 2.



will establish the certainty and utility of metaphysical science, which has hitherto been too much under the dominion of the imagination, with which it has no concern<sup>11</sup>.

Facts constitute an extensive and important species of truth. Their first and sole principle is the evidence of the external senses, and require for their proof, the coincidence in a particular transaction, of person, time, and place. Standing themselves as first principles, resulting immediately from the senses, they demand no direct reasoning, either inductive or syllogistic. But reason is employed in examining the senses, by comparing them with themselves, to ascertain, whether they be sound and well-informed, subject to any impediment from nature, imposition from art, or deception from accident. The truth which results from facts is immediate and irresistible, at once, self-evident and intuitive<sup>12</sup>.

Facts are enlarged, and extended to distant times and places, by History. The first principle of historical knowledge is the faculty of

<sup>11</sup> Part i. chap. 3.

<sup>12</sup> Vol. i. chap. 4.

memory, supported by that universal affection, the love of truth, producing and co-operating with the secondary principle of testimony. The historic method of reasoning is inductive, *from* the primary principle, exercised in innumerable particular instances, *to* the general truth of the secondary. Testimony is, however, different from other general principles, and the reasoning from it very distinct. It is not, like them, the *cause* of truth, it is only the *medium*, by which, truths derived from other causes are conveyed, producing various degrees of conviction, according to the different circumstances, persons, times, and places, with which it is connected, and requiring to be particularly investigated, through the competency of witnesses, the fidelity of relators, the authenticity of records, and other collateral vouchers. Historical truth is only secondary and indirect, varying in its strength through all the degrees of probability with the circumstances, the fidelity of the investigation, and the clearness or obscurity of the media through which it passes<sup>13</sup>.

<sup>13</sup> Vol. i. chap. 5.

Perhaps, the author should have mentioned that *origina*

These kinds of truth all belong to the province of the intellect, or theoretic mind.

The practic functions exist in the province of the Will, and relate to moral action, of which, the end is happiness. The primary principle of Morals is the internal or moral sense,—an instinct of our common nature, informing us of good and evil, of the existence of the will, by which men choose the one and avoid the other, and of reward or punishment attaching to the performance or neglect of our duties. Hence we infer a superior law and moral government, the foundation of moral obligation, fixed in the attributes and will of God.—From the operation of these primary principles in innumerable instances, reason derives, by a kind of tacit induction, two universal propositions, as secondary principles,

All voluntary good will meet with reward :—

All voluntary evil with punishment.—

But as morality consists of particular actions which are numberless, arising out of various

principle of the human mind, which disposes us naturally to believe, and give credit to the testimony of others; which may be called the *principle of faith, or credence*.—Editor.

relations, it is the chief office of ethical reasoning, to range these, by induction, in classes, called virtues and vices, sins and duties, with their appropriate distinctions. We thus form less general propositions, as middle principles, under which, particular actions may be arranged by syllogism. The truths so deduced are ethical. These, however clear and strong in their conviction, are very different and inferior, in logical evidence, to mathematical demonstrations. The most perfect body of ethics is the morality of the Gospel<sup>14</sup>.

Poetry belongs to the imagination, and employs the faculties of imitation, or invention, to produce its various *effects*. It comprehends all the elegant arts. Their end is pleasure, combined with instruction, and their excellence depends on the truth of their various effects, under the conduct of reason. The first principle of the poetical or inventive art, is a native and internal sensibility, recognising the objects and events which produce the different modes of pleasure and pain. Of these different effects often experienced, reason first

<sup>14</sup> Vol. i. chap. 6.

investigates the proper causes, which she then arranges, by induction, in general classes, as poetical ideas or secondary principles. From these, the poet draws the resources of his art, which he applies in all the different acts of imitation or invention, to produce the poetical effect. If these generals be well formed and judiciously applied, if the imitation be true, and the resemblance which it exhibits just, the *effect* produced upon the mind will be uniform and certain. This effect constitutes poetic truth, operating on the sensibility of all, according to its power and delicacy<sup>15</sup>.

Music is also an imitative art, or rather an art conjoined to science, for its tones may be measured by geometric progression. It consists in sound and motion, operating through the auditory nerves on the mind, and producing the most touching effects on the passions. Its truth consists in exciting this natural sensibility, according to the style in which it is performed<sup>16</sup>.

At the conclusion of the first volume, I have offered some strictures on the Aristote-

<sup>15</sup> Vol. i. chap. 7.

<sup>16</sup> Vol. i. chap. 8.

lian logic, in order to trace its origin, and estimate its value<sup>17</sup>. I have also animadverted on the discipline of the Schools, with a cordial wish for their improvement<sup>18</sup>.

But we now proceed to a far more important species of truth.—Theology is a science more distinct from all the preceding, than any of them are from each other. It does not originate, like them, from any material subject, or from the mind of man; but from another and far higher source, the mind of God. In this study, all the provinces of intellect, will, and imagination are concerned. Its logic will, therefore, derive important elucidation from a comparison with all.

The theological principle is totally different from and infinitely superior to every other, being the testimony, or word of God, conveyed to man by a supernatural mode of communication called *revelation*. The nature of this divine testimony is somewhat similar to human testimony, from which similarity

<sup>17</sup> Appendix i. vol. i.

<sup>18</sup> Appendix ii. vol. i.



it takes possession of the human mind. When the possession is secured, it is not only universal in its operation, but far superior to all other principles, and transcendent in its power. When the principle is established, it rejects all reasoning, whether in deducing its truths, or in respectively deciding on them. They result immediately from its divine authority, and produce an effect in proportion to the principle; which is the strongest and most implicit assent of the mind, distinguished by the name of *faith*. Theologic truths are mysteries, distinct from all others, to be contemplated with reverence, and embraced with implicit confidence<sup>19</sup>.

Though reason can have no original, or direct, concern with the principle, or the mysteries, of revelation, its office in theology is various and important. It is bound to inquire,—whether such a revelation, containing such a principle, with its mysteries and credentials, was actually given by God, or received by men, at the time and place asserted<sup>20</sup>.

<sup>19</sup> Vol. ii. chap. 1.

<sup>20</sup> Vol. ii. chap. 2.

The grounds of reasoning in theology are, consequently, the various means by which the Gospel, containing this principle or word of God, was confirmed, is conveyed down, and to be interpreted by us. The method it pursues, is, first, to estimate the morality or internal evidence of the gospel; secondly, to judge of that part of its external evidence called miracles; thirdly, to study the prophecies—the remaining part of its external evidence. And, as both the time and place of this revelation are far removed, Reason has also to inquire, by an historical investigation,—whether the witnesses of such evidences were well informed and faithful; whether the written record, in which the whole is contained, was aided by inspiration; and whether the Scriptures, which we possess, exhibit a true and authentic transcript of the original<sup>21</sup>.

In the study of the Holy Scriptures, thus confirmed and authenticated, reasoning becomes an act of interpretation: and the right and true method of interpreting the volume of Grace, is analogous and similar to that,

<sup>21</sup> Vol. ii. chap. 2, sect. 1.

which has, of late years, been adopted by the best natural philosophers, in interpreting the volume of nature : not by hypothesis, factitious system, and disputation, but from grounds and documents contained in Scripture, and inseparably interwoven with it<sup>22</sup>.

In the general interpretation of the Holy Scriptures, the first object of the student's attention is the languages, in which, they were originally written, or early translated. The second is the analogical style. The third, the parabolical style of the sacred writings, in all its compass and variety<sup>23</sup>.

In the particular interpretation, or translation, of the Holy Scriptures, it is the first object, by an able and accurate collation, to procure a genuine text. The next is, to translate it in another language, according to those rules of impartiality, propriety, perspicuity, and uniformity, which the peculiar nature of inspired and divine productions warrant and require.

The truth, resulting from this various and extensive train of reasoning in reference to

<sup>22</sup> Vol. ii. chap. 4.

<sup>23</sup> Vol. ii. chap. 5.

the evidences, the authority, the authenticity, the interpretation, and translation of the Holy Scriptures, is theological. It is totally different from every other, requiring a different assent, and though superior in value, is inferior in scientific force. From this logical inferiority, faith, through which it is embraced and entertained by the inhabitants of every age,—the patriarch of old, the eye-witness, and the modern believer,—becomes the greatest of virtues; engaging all the best affections of the heart, as well as the faculties of the understanding, and constituting that pure and perfect wisdom, in which truth and charity are united.—With these my lectures commenced, and with these they end<sup>24</sup>, as being, in the solemn language of our great philosopher,—“the haven and sabbath of all human contemplations<sup>25</sup>.”

In this general Chart or Geography of

<sup>24</sup> Vol. ii. chap. 6.

<sup>25</sup> Cum sit portus et sabbatum humanarum contemplationum omnium.—Bacon. De Augm. Scient. lib. iii. cap. i. “The sabbath and port of all men’s labours and peregrinations.”—Advancement of Learning, b. ii.

Truth, I have attempted to give a parallel and comparative view of the different kinds of learning, human and divine, classing and arranging them under separate provinces, and analyzing them, according to their respective nature and constitution. Thus, whilst all may be seen, at one view, in their relative situation ; each, in its proper cultivation, may be kept distinct ; its own principles asserted ; its own proofs employed<sup>26</sup> ; and the conviction of its truth measured and ascertained by

<sup>26</sup> Superest artis judicandi appendix quædam insignis, quam desiderari statuimus : Siquidem Aristoteles rem notavit, modum rei nullibi persecutus est. Ea tractat, quales demonstrationes ad quales materias sive subjecta applicari debeant ; ut hæc doctrina tanquam judicationes judicationum contineat. Optime enim Aristoteles, Neque enim demonstrationes ab oratoribus, neque suasiones a mathematicis requiri debere monet : Ut, si in probationis genere aberretur, judicatio ipsa non absolvatur. Quando vero sint quatuor demonstrationum genera, vel per consensum immediatum et notiones communes, vel per inductionem, vel per syllogismum, vel per eam (quam recte vocat Aristoteles) demonstrationem in orbem (non a notioribus scilicet sed tanquam de plano), habent hæ demonstrationes singulæ certa subjecta et materias scientiarum in quibus pollent ; alia, a quibus excluduntur. Etenim rigor et curiositas, poscendo probationes nimium severas in aliquibus, multo magis facilitas et remissio in acquiescendo probationibus levioribus in aliis, inter ea sunt numeranda, quæ detrimenti plurimum et impediementi scientiis attulerunt.—Bacon. De Augm. Scient. lib. v. cap. 4.

one common scale. This appeared, in my mind, to be the just and philosophical method to keep the understanding clear and steady in its researches ; to render it successful in its investigations, sensible of its own weakness, and thankfully acquiescent in every kind of truth,—particularly in that, which is the subject of the Christian faith ; to ground and establish which, on a broad and solid basis, was the principal object of these lectures.

This various and extensive task I have executed, in a treatise of more than sufficient length, if the number and value of its pages are considered ; yet far too short, I fear, if we consider the extent and importance of the subject. It was not, however, my intention to descend to a full discussion of the several branches of learning ; but only to take a general and cursory view of each. Nor do I presume to teach others, in the style of a dictator ; but to invite them to study for themselves, in the language of a friend and fellow-labourer. And though I should not have leisure or ability to execute the other parts of my projected plan, need this be deemed imperfect or incomplete on that ac-



count, since it embraces the first object I had in view, as entirely and independently, as if I were to execute the whole design.

#### PROSPECTUS OF THE FUTURE PLAN.

The future purposes, to which, this general Chart will be preparatory, after placing theology upon its distinct and proper basis, will be, to confirm more fully the Christian faith; and also to develop the causes of heretical and schismatical errors, by which that faith is opposed.

To these purposes, nothing can so effectually contribute, as comprehensive views, which break down narrow habits of thinking, and set the mind at liberty; which enable it to embrace the most distant and dissimilar parts of learning; and which give it the command of the general expanse of knowledge. It is thus the eye looks down from a rock on the whole country below, and surveys the bearings and connexions of every part, allowing each its proper latitude and extent, and contemplating the entire landscape without mixture or confusion.

The second Part of my plan will consist, (should I be encouraged to pursue it,) in applying those parts of human learning, which have been analyzed and digested in the first volume, to theology : in order to discover exactly how far, when cultivated according to the rule of reason, they contribute to its evidence and support, and where their application ought to terminate. This will give a comprehensive view of the right use of learning<sup>27</sup>. In the execution of this part, we shall observe the several branches, as they spring from the general trunk of knowledge ; we shall distinguish their affinities, connexions, and dependences. We shall thus ascertain how one kind of truth is built upon another, and how far those which are human, can minister, in their subordinate and proper exercise, to those which are divine.

And the third Part will very conveniently accompany the second. By turning our attention, from the right use of learning,

<sup>27</sup> Vol. i. p. 73.

in which the different branches are thus logically contributing to theology, to its abuse<sup>28</sup>, in which the rule of reason is neglected or infringed, by their being illogically confounded and mixed together; we shall be able to discover the true and adequate causes of those heretical and schismatical errors, which we hope need only be detected, to be eventually eradicated.

The execution of this part, which forms the completion of the plan laid down, if attended with that success which an author may be permitted to hope, promises to be an effectual support of sacred truth, by a radical subversion of its opponents. It is at the same time calculated to reward our labour, by conferring a high gratification upon the mind, through every stage of the investigation: “*Suave est spectaculum, stantem aut ambulantiem in littore, navem intueri tempestate in mare jactatam; suave itidem ex editâ arce duas cernere acies concursantes in planitie: at nil dulcius est homini, quam mens per doctrinam in arce*

<sup>28</sup> Vol. i. p. 69.

veritatis collocata, unde aliorum errores et labores dispicere possit<sup>29</sup>.”

All falsehood is opposite to truth. Error is that falsehood, which availing itself of the weakness of the understanding, the depravity of the will, or the undue influence of the imagination, assumes the colour of truth, by which, reason is deceived. Truth is the health, error the disease of the mind. The one leads to honour and happiness, the other to disgrace and misery.

The human body is a machine or system consisting of many different parts and operations: the mind is also a machine or system consisting of corresponding parts and operations, and, though their union be mysterious, their analogy is conspicuous. The health of both consists in the due and regular performance of their respective parts and operations; and the disorders of both spring respectively from their suspension or irregularity. To remedy the disorders of the body, is the duty of the physician; and to rectify those of the mind, is the duty of the philosopher. But before either can apply his

<sup>29</sup> Bacon. De Augm. Scient. lib. i.

remedy, he must ascertain the cause. The maxim, "*Sublatâ causâ tollitur effectus*," holds as good in philosophy, as in medicine, and has there, indeed, a more full and efficient operation. After the physician has discovered the cause, he must devise and apply his medicines, without any certainty of success, in the event ; whereas, in philosophy divine or human, the discovery of the evil should at least in generous minds, prove the source of cure.

To enable him to investigate disease, the physician should be conversant with the anatomy of the body, have studied its economy and analyzed its functions. In their obstruction or irregularity, he remarks those symptoms which reveal to him the cause of the malady. By a similar analysis of mind, and an acquaintance with its faculties and operations, and by ascertaining the proper exercise of reason in every department of knowledge, whether in its suspension or misapplication, the philosopher is enabled to discover the different causes of error<sup>30</sup>.

<sup>30</sup> See Bacon's *Advancement of Learning*, b. i., and *De*

The first general cause springs from the neglect or suspension of reason ; as a consequence of which, men embrace falsehood for truth, with an implicit trust on the credit and authority of others.

From this cause, spring all those vulgar errors, cherished from age to age, by the blindness of prejudice and the inveteracy of habit. Hence also arise the errors of superstition, differing from the former, only as they prevail in matters of religion, and become more inveterate, in proportion to the greater seriousness and solemnity of the subject, and the universal interest which it involves. Alike the offspring of ignorance and obstinacy, they embrace each other as sisters. They have ever grown and thriven together, in the same soil and climate, under the same social administration and the same friendly cloud of darkness and prejudice. They are gradually annihilated and dispelled by the approach of learning, wherever it gains admittance, as night is dispelled

Augm. Scient. lib. i.; also Dr. Reid's Essays, vol. ii. essay vi. chap. 8, in which an excellent commentary is given on Bacon's " Idols."—*Editor*.



at the approach of day. Under the deadly shade of superstitious errors, superinduced by the artifices of the interested and ambitious, and thickened by the base and corrupted policy of degenerate states, devoted to the god of slavery, the religion of Asia, and the greater part of Europe has languished, for many ages. As knowledge, however, advances, these errors and superstitions naturally decline. In several parts of Europe they have been long on the wane, and are insensibly hastening to decay. The errors of the Jews have been ably refuted<sup>31</sup>. Those of the Roman pontiff, notwithstanding all the gloss and varnish with which they have been disguised, have been abundantly exposed<sup>32</sup>; whilst those of the false prophet of Arabia, though under the cloud of Asiatic ignorance more explicitly espoused, are still more easily refuted<sup>33</sup>.

<sup>31</sup> Limborch de Veritate Religionis Christianæ amica collatio cum erudito Judæo.

<sup>32</sup> Chillingworth's Safe Way to Salvation.

<sup>33</sup> Jenkin's Reasonableness of the Christian Religion. Bp. Gibson's Second Pastoral Letter. Grotius De Veritate Christianæ Religionis. Prideaux's Life of Mahomet, and Dr. White's Bampton Lectures.

The author has here, and in several other parts of this

The second general cause of error springs from a different source,—the perversion and misapplication of reason,—still more deceitful and difficult to be detected and extirpated: which, in the multiform shapes that it assumes, will be the subject of our future studies. The abuse of learning, by its violation of the rule of reason, constitutes this cause in these several ways.—First, by reasoning from no principles of any kind; secondly, by reasoning from the principles of one branch of learning, in the method of another: thirdly, by reasoning from the principles of one, to the truths of another: lastly, by expecting the same kind and degree of conviction in the truths of one, which belong to another, and of which it does not admit.—Thus this second general source of error may be distinguished into four classes, which, in their separate or joint operation, will account for all scientific and theological errors, however different they may appear. This verifies the obser-

work, expressed himself far too sanguinely on the decrease of error and the progress of truth.—*Editor.*

vation of our great philosopher,—“ amongst opposite errors, the causes of erring are commonly the same<sup>34</sup>.”

Springing from a different source, these learned errors have a different effect from those of ignorance. As these are on the wane, the former perhaps are on the increase. Strenuously intrenching themselves in the usurped fortresses of truth and jealous of their hold, they maintain their false position, by all the formalities of reasoning and ceremonials of argument, and lead in the chains of sophistry a considerable part of the learned. Assuming various shapes and postures of defence, shifting from ground to ground, and relieving each other with the changes of time and fashion; while the mind is subject to vice and infirmity, they threaten to continue and to struggle even with Truth herself. They are the adversaries which religion has chiefly to dread; for though its truth will overcome at last, they meanwhile weaken its force and retard its progress.

It is the usual method of combating these

<sup>34</sup> Bacon's Advancement of Learning.

errors to attack them, with the arms of polemical divinity, as they appear in some heretical form, equipped in the accoutrements of false reasoning. But the more successful and compendious mode of exterminating them would be to discover and expose their causes. This would essentially defeat their consequences in every form. Instead of aiming bold and efficient strokes, at the root of the tree of error, controversy, however well conducted, is only like beating among the branches. If one be lopped off, perhaps several may spring up in its place.—This method has prevailed, because it is friendly to that polemical contention and scholastic disputation, which delight to keep up the strife from age to age ; in which, so many champions of truth have been defeated by the patrons of error, and so many battles left undecided. The method which these lectures would adopt and recommend, is, not to combat individual errors under the disguise of truth, by individual arguments ; but to investigate and expose their general cause, under the conviction, that it will contribute more effectually to

their extirpation, than if we were to write volumes of controversy to attack those endless forms and appearances of error, which lie in wait to deceive and mislead mankind. When the tree is pierced in the root, its leaves, branches, and poisonous fruit must come down together.

The general causes which I have mentioned, and to which, in their joint or separate operation, all learned errors are to be attributed, originate either in the pride or prejudice of the human mind.

The first, which consists in reasoning from no principle at all, however absurd it may appear even to common sense, is of vast influence and extent. The powers of the human mind are doubtless great; but its presumption is often greater<sup>35</sup>. Not content to be employed on such principles and

<sup>35</sup> Alius error fuit ex nimia reverentia, et quasi adoratione intellectus humani, unde homines abduxere se a contemplatione naturæ, atque ab experientia, in propriis meditationibus et ingenii commentis susque deque volutantes. Cæterum præclaros hos opinatores et (si ita loqui licet) intellectualistas, qui tamen pro maxime sublimibus et divinis philosophis haberi solent, recte heraclitus perstrinxit,—‘Homines,’ inquit, ‘quærunť veritatem in microcosmis suis, non in mundo majori.’ Respuunt enim quasi abecedarium naturæ,

materials, as are furnished for her use by Providence and the nature of things in a slow and sober exercise, she vainly presumes, by an action and operation of her own, to invent others of a superior order, by the help of which, she may soar with rapid wing into the possession of the sublimest truth. Buoyed up by these self-inventions, she attempts unbounded flights into the fertile, but delusive regions of imagination. In these regions, was erected that edifice of hypothesis, filled with dreams and fictions, with which the pride and self-sufficiency of philosophers rendered them enamoured, and embraced them for the most valuable truth. From these fictitious principles, we observe that even Aristotle, Plato, and Pythagoras, the ancient, and more particularly some modern metaphysicians, have been led, by trains of solid reasoning, to systems of splen-

*primumque in operibus divinis tirocinium: quod si non facerent, potuissent fortasse gradatim et sensim, post literas simplices et deinceps syllabas, ad textum et volumen ipsarum creaturarum expedite legendum ascendere. At illi contra, jugi mentis agitatione, urgent et tanquam invocant suos genios, ut vaticinentur eis edantque oracula, quibus merito et suaviter decipiuntur.—Bacon. De Augm. Scient. lib. i.*



did and delusive theory. When the mind, that complex machine, has the first wheel, which gives movement to every other, set wrong, however ingenious be the mechanism, the whole will terminate in error.

The peculiar nature and mystic sublimity of theology open a two-fold door for this cause of error. It is liable either on principles of human invention, to erect nominal truths, which have no existence ; or, to attempt, from such principles, to prove or disprove truths, which are to be embraced on no other principle, than the testimony of God<sup>36</sup>.

The other causes, which have been assigned as the general sources of error, consisting in the adoption of wrong principles, in the application of a wrong method of reasoning, or in the expectation of a wrong species of conviction, have their origin in prejudices, springing from partial and inveterate habits.

Man is altogether a creature of habit. All his virtues are habits ; all his vices are habits ;

<sup>36</sup> Bacon. Nov. Org. aphor. 89.

and habit has a powerful sway over the mind, not only in the elegant, but also in the scientific parts of learning. As the ear is prepared and qualified by habit, for the enjoyment of music, the eye for that of painting, and every other part of the mental and corporeal frame, adapted to its proper object : so is the mind prepared and qualified by habit, for the search and relish of every kind of truth. But habit, which is naturally the friend of virtue and knowledge, by being too long and closely confined to the same objects, employments, and pursuits, as it is observed to contract and even distort the body ; so it generates in the mind a prejudice and confirms a partiality, which not only cramp and confine, but often weaken and destroy its specific powers<sup>37</sup>.

It is the remark of a living writer, who is no ordinary philosopher, that “custom and some other causes have made many deviations from the natural pleasures and pains of the several tastes ; but then the power of distinguishing

<sup>37</sup> See Bacon's account of these *idols*, Nov. Org. lib. i. aphor. 58—62.

between the natural and the acquired relish remains to the very last. A man," says he, "frequently comes to prefer the taste of tobacco to that of sugar, and the flavour of vinegar to that of milk ; but this makes no confusion in tastes, whilst he is sensible that the tobacco and vinegar are not sweet, and whilst he knows that habit alone has reconciled his palate to these alien pleasures<sup>38</sup>." Unfortunately, however, for the interests of truth, there is here no parallel between the mind and the palate ; for when the mind has been enslaved by long usage to the cultivation of one kind of truth, it not only relishes and prefers, but becomes often insensible to the distinction, nay, even existence of any other.

Thus addicted to one set of principles, habituated to one train of reasoning, and accustomed to one kind of conclusions, men are often disqualified, by their very habit of stating, reasoning, and concluding, and even by their success in some parts of learning,

<sup>38</sup> Burke's *Introd. to Essay on the Sublime and Beautiful*. Aristotle's *Metaph. b. ii. chap. 3*.

from prosecuting truth, in others. Wedded by an intemperate fondness and admiration to their own studies, and often not knowing much beyond them, they are unwilling to allow that truth can exist in any other shape. In every part of science, it is their principles must be adopted, or their method of reasoning employed, or their conclusions drawn. They refuse to be satisfied with any other<sup>39</sup>.

When, under the influence of these prejudices and partial habits, philosophers turn their attention from their other studies, to theology, they are either defeated in their attempt to reason at all, they reason incorrectly, or they are disappointed, that its truths do not bring the same conviction, as they have been accustomed to feel. This

<sup>39</sup> Alius error huic posteriori finitissimus est, quod homines sæpius imbuant et inficiant meditationes et doctrinas suas, opinionibus quibusdam et conceptibus propriis, quos potissimum in admiratione habent, aut artibus, quibus maxime addicti et consecrati sunt; cætera omnia illis deliciis inficientes et quasi intingentes, licet fuco admodum fallaci. Sic suæ philosophiæ immiscuit Plato theologiam, Aristoteles logicam, Secunda schola Platonis, (Proclus scilicet et reliqui), mathematicas. Istas enim artes solebant illi, tanquam filiolos suos primogenitos, suaviari.—Bacon. De Augm. Scient. lib. i.

will account for a phenomenon much to be deplored,—that some of the brightest ornaments of human learning have reasoned themselves out of the sacred temple of light and truth, into the gloomy dungeon of infidelity.

Such I apprehend to be the true causes of the most dangerous and inveterate errors which beset the Christian faith ; and which are the more to be lamented, as they raise enemies to religion in the persons of those, who, from their love of learning, would by its proper use prove the ablest supporters of Christianity. After showing, therefore, how far those parts of learning which have been analyzed in the preceding volume, minister to religion, I would endeavour to trace these errors to their proper causes, in their joint or separate operation. This method of combating error will relieve me from two evils attendant on that of polemical controversy—disputation, which terminates in logomachy—and intemperate warmth, which ends in animosity.

Learned men have often concealed what they possessed, or supposed they possessed, in

sciences and systems<sup>40</sup> (as the miser hoards his money in chests and boxes), instead of increasing the general stock of learning, by drawing their opinions from true and genuine principles, and guarding them from error, by carefully inquiring into the causes from which it springs. They then defend them with all the fury of clamorous disputation. Hence results polemical controversy, in which the combatants and defenders of systems take the field, each equipped in his private armour, which he employs in his own partial way : and the whole merit of the contest consists in lengthening out the disputation, by univocating, equivocating, and defining by terms abstracted from things, and propositions devoid of meaning. The same questions, which had been agitated for ages,

<sup>40</sup> Alius error est, præmatura atque proterva reductio doctrinarum in artes et methodos ; quod cum fit, plerumque scientia aut parum, aut nihil proficit.—Bacon. De Augm. Scient. lib. i.

I have lately met with a curious and striking illustration of this remark in the “*Axiomata Philosophica*” of the Venerable Bede (Colon. 1618), in which all the elements of science and philosophy are reduced into first principles or axioms, and this, long before Newton or Bacon had instructed us in our ignorance.—*Editor*.



were left undetermined ; and thus the battles, which were neither lost nor won, were always ready to be fought again.

Of the three expedients, proposed by its great reformer, to remove the difficulties of learning, the most important, he observes, is that “ wisdom of design, which strikes out the right way to accomplish what we propose ; that prudent choice of means, which conduces more effectually to the end in view, than the application and accumulation of the greatest force<sup>41</sup>.” If the plan, which I have laid down for the discovery of different kinds of truth, be sound and philosophical, it will point out the road which is to be pursued in the detection of error, which is its opposite. As the way to the one is in a right line exactly prescribed, every deviation from that line will lead to the other. And thus we have only to mark with care the particular cause or obstacle, which intervenes to

<sup>41</sup> Inter hæc tria, merito primas tenet consilii prudentia et sanitas ; hoc est, monstratio et delineatio viæ rectæ et proclivis, ad rem, quæ proponitur, peragendam—medii prudens electio efficacius conducit ad rem, quam virium aut intentio aut accumulatio.—Bacon. De Augm. Scient. lib. ii. cap. 1.

throw reason out of the direct, into the oblique road—by shunning the cause we shall avoid the danger.

This is to detect error by the scale of truth immediately applied. This would bring all reasoning, which has been so various and so clamorous, to a certain and silent issue, by prescribing a general and standing law,—“That the matter in question be referred to its proper province, that the combatants come out of their private ground, and meet it on its own principles, and none beside; that they leave behind their prejudices and habits, which are their private armour, and argue in the method which is its own, and in no other; and that they go hand in hand in the philosophical, not disputatious search of truth, and detection of error, obliging themselves to embrace the one, and to discard the other, of whatever kind, or wherever it be.”

2. As to the other evil incident to controversy, however irritable be the temper of the theological reasoner, the method here proposed would relieve him from the effects of unbecoming warmth. It can trace error to any of the causes which have

been assigned, without charging it indiscriminately on guilt ; and, in the fair pursuit of its object, it can allow others all the merit which they possess, and pardon their faults, convinced of the validity of the axiom—that Truth is never so graceful and successful, as when led by the hand of Charity.

The spirit of this Wisdom, we are taught, “is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy<sup>42</sup>. This lovely portrait, it becomes her children, therefore, in the act of justifying her, neither to deface or distort. Why should intemperate zeal be suffered to take the place of sober argument ? Why should candour be supplanted by illiberality, or benevolence by scorn ?—By the favour of Providence and the liberality of the public, the Christian church has ample endowments, if properly bestowed, for the support of advocates, who are able and willing to maintain her cause ; and why should they swell with anger, if the temple of religion be attacked ? Experience would

<sup>42</sup> James, iii. 17.

inform them, they have far better reason to rejoice,—her truths will be certain to triumph from examination, and in that triumph, to gain larger and firmer hold on the public mind.

An excellent prelate, whose learning and virtues do honour to this age in which he lives, in his zeal for moderation, deems it an act of wisdom, “to show condescension to the very prejudices and humours of men;” and is also of opinion, that “their errors may sometimes be removed, by arguing with them on their own mistaken principles.” To this one act of his condescension, the author of these lectures cannot consistently subscribe, as it is diametrically opposed to the whole scope and tenour of this work. It has been stated as a principal cause of error. In all other points, his lordship’s condescension and moderation do equal honour to his heart and understanding. “The errors of men,” he proceeds, “may sometimes be removed, by allowing all that truth and reason will warrant to their opinions; by putting the fairest construction upon their designs, instead of fiercely declaiming against them;

above all, by testifying a sincere disposition to advance truth and goodness, without any indirect views to our own interest. Or, were all other considerations out of the case, we could never be excused from proceeding in the way of gentleness and civility, from treating them with due respect, and expressing the sincerest good-will to their persons. Be their moral and religious defects what they may, we should hardly be wise, if we reproved with bitterness, advised with insolence, and condemned with passion. In all addresses to mistaken and bad men, where our purpose is to inform, or amend them, the gentlest applications are surely the best, because these excite no passion to counteract their virtue <sup>43</sup>."

Thus have I executed, to the utmost of my power, the first Part of this new logic, or general investigation of truth and error, and given a *prospectus* of the remainder. Whilst I acknowledge myself under great obligations to different writers and philosophers,

<sup>43</sup> Hurd, vol. ii. serm. 2.

and particularly to Aristotle and Bacon, the two champions of learning, I have freely exercised the privilege of an author, by submitting their doctrines to the examination of my own judgment ; thus rendering myself solely and properly responsible for the result. If I have been too bold and independent in the exercise of this privilege, to say that I deplore it, is what I deem a very weak and insufficient apology. The best apology which I can make to the authors I have injured, or to the public, is to solicit the fair and candid examination of scholars and philosophers, with the promise to retract, change, correct, and improve any or every part, upon fair conviction. Sensible of the many faults and imperfections, which must have overtaken me in this various and extensive walk, and professing, that the improvement of sound learning is not only the ruling motive, but the sole desire of my heart, I have to request of the few, who shall do these volumes the honour of a perusal (from the nature of the work, it neither expects nor hopes for many readers), that with a free and independent mind, they will read with care, and judge



with candour ; and no one will, I trust, have cause to complain of the obstinacy or unfairness of the author. And should this humble essay, which we presume to call a new logic, have the singular good fortune to lead men, who are the sons of science, to think and to judge for themselves, and not according to the thoughts and opinions of others ; this one effect, by opening the door to sound improvement, will prove more than a sufficient recompense for my labour.

*[The following Extract from the Author's Manuscripts was omitted by mistake at the close of Chap. V. p. 187.]*

Having thus delineated the particular styles of the Holy Scriptures, as they are ranged under the heads of analogy and parallel, it may be useful to state the general rules by which reason should proceed, in establishing the proper interpretation of the Sacred Volume—I. By judging of the particular sense, from the general scope and design of the whole; II. When the inquiry relates to any particular occasion (as in the Epistles), by considering well the particular circumstances, and whether the sense has a just connexion with the context, both preceding and subsequent; III. By diligently comparing one Scripture with another, Scripture being ever the best interpreter of itself; and lastly, by examining whether the sense, thus obtained, be agreeable to the analogy of faith; that is, whether in itself, or its consequences, it be consonant or contrary to the general tenor of the dis-

pensation, to the known attributes of God, and the acknowledged articles of faith.

It is in concert and combination with these primary canons for the just interpretation of the word of God, that we would advise the theological student, to pay also a just deference to the authority of the Christian writers of the first and second centuries; not the slavish deference of the Romish church, but that, which is quite consistent with the spirit and examples of our own Protestant reformers.

As a corollary to these general rules of scriptural interpretation, in all controverted places of Holy Scripture, the best ground and foundation we can proceed upon, is the sense in which they were understood by those, to whom they were first delivered. Those who received the doctrines of religion from the mouths of the apostles, or from their writings, whilst they were living, must have best known the import of these writings; and next, those to whom they taught them; and thus in succession, through the several ages of the church. This is bringing the act of interpretation, not to the assumed authority

of the Romish church, but to matter of fact ; to what was the universal doctrine of the general, or Catholic church, in the first and purest ages. This was the method taken by the early Fathers upon all occasions. They did not rely on the refinements of criticism, or the etymology of words ; but the question with them was,—*Quis unquam talia audivit ?*— And, considering that the Gospel was preached, before the death of the apostles, in most countries of the known world, the doctrine universally received in different and distant countries, must be that which was first preached and delivered to them, and could not result from any concert or contrivance among those, who had no intercourse or even knowledge of each other. And thus, by the providence of God, the universal church, in all its various branches and divisions, becomes a check upon itself, and remains the standing guardian of the Holy Scriptures,—“ the Pillar and Ground of the Truth.”

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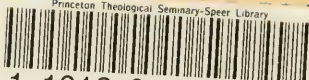








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